

(Written to Yashushi Akashi, Assistant to U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, and then reproduced and distributed to students around the country by the American Zionist Youth Foundation (AZYF))

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This letter has come to our attention and we want to bring it to yours. It was written by an American Zionist student studying law and international affairs at New York University to a member of the staff of the Secretary General of the United Nations after a lunch discussion on the subject. We are reprinting it with permission from the writer and eliminating irrelevant and personal passages.

December 2, 1973

Dear

After our lunch yesterday I think a number of issues deserve further comment. But for this letter I wish only to elaborate upon the Middle East and the policies of Israel. I would not be candid if I did not express to you how disturbed I was to learn that you believe the major issue and the current primary focus is that of Israeli return to approximately the 1967 boundaries (more precisely "cease-fire lines"). Needless to say, this is what the Arabs - who have become rather masterful (in comparison to the recent past) at playing to the gallery of public opinion and using rhetoric and smiles in addition to guns and oil--would like everyone to believe. No doubt the Russians have been giving the Arabs political lessons while encouraging them to test out their new weapons. Indeed, the Russians are doing a rather credible job manipulating tears and schisms in the Western world as well as between the Arab world and the Western world.

Since the issues in the Middle East are of world importance unparalleled since World War II except maybe earlier in Berlin and Cuba (and I think it could be argued that what was at stake in these earlier confrontations was not as crucial or historical as what is at stake in the Middle East), I want to try to be completely clear in expressing how I view the situation. As well, since the involvement of the U.N. in the Middle East is a crucial test of whether this institution is capable of the sophistication and impartiality necessary to earn the respect and more importantly the trust of those of us who believe strongly in internationalism and desperately in peace but who have been forced back to a modern version (a nuclear-world version) of "realpolitik" and a somewhat nationalist stance, I feel we must imperatively express our sincere and deeply felt viewpoints to each other.

I am not sure you really realize how truly and deeply Israelis desire peace. By "peace" we do not mean a few years without war. We mean a situation where our neighbors will recognize and accept our existence as a Jewish State and respect our borders (and as I have told you the Arab map of the Middle East (literally) includes an "Occupied Palestine" but not an "Israel"), a situation where the military arms race has its direction reversed so as to provide credible and tangible assurance of the acceptance of recognition and lasting peace, a situation where our neighbors will cooperate with us in terminating the wretched conditions under which over a million Palestinians now live, a situation in which over a period of time normal relations of personal contact, trade, and exchange can be resumed between the Arab peoples and the Jewish people, a situation in which trust, respect, and even friendship can seem at least a reasonable goal. Such an overall situation must of course be approached

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in steps -- "peace" is a dynamic process and a continuing state of mind, not a static concept or a goal to be achieved at Kilometer 101 or at Geneva "Peace" Conference. It involves phases of territorial return and adjustment, defensible and accepted borders, military rearmament and weapons limitations, international arrangements and guarantees, aid to and resettlement of Palestinians -- in other words Resolution #242 is a reasonable basis for progress. But, most importantly it involves a realistic appraisal of the obstacles in front of us and a genuine sincerity to make progress -- only such an approach can gradually establish the basic elements of trust without which there will be no peace and no unraveling of the hatred and fear that has evolved over the past half century.

Quite possibly outsiders do not realize how truly Israel desires "Peace" because it has been and remains extremely difficult for us to admit to fear and apprehension and self-doubt either to ourselves or to our enemies. Psychologically we are not sure we can allow ourselves the luxury of self-doubt and the honesty of fear. We are afraid to fear, afraid that our enemies will interpret weakness and will persist in a struggle that will be without end until we have been destroyed. Israeli military strategy has to some extent used this psychology of the big invincible sword punishing acts against us and making clear our superiority and depth of conviction. Internally we have had and continue to have quite a debate -- to the outside world and especially to the Arabs we have not been able, through sublimated fear, to bring ourselves to be seen as less than arrogant and self-assured. All groups form an identity based upon past history and perceived necessities. Yet, in my opinion, this first generation of Israeli native-born (Sabras) is amazing for its openness, its spirited culture, and its realization of the ironies of Israel's existence. If pragmatism has overtaken ideology it is mainly because Israel exists in the 20th century and the sabra generation especially wants to live not as "The Chosen People," but as, after so long, a "normal" people. The real danger in Israel comes not from aggressive militarists or fanatical expansionists pushing for a return to Biblical Greater Israel. Rather, the danger comes from too pragmatic and maybe too historical a psychology which leads people to believe that the conflict between Jew and Arab cannot be ended and that the destiny for these two Middle Eastern cultures is hostility and periodic war. I know quite moderate Israelis who calmly admit that if they were Palestinians they might be members of El Fatah. This very sensitivity, ironically, leads many on the right-wing of Israeli politics to believe that any real "Peace" is for the foreseeable future only an illusion or a trap and that only Israeli strength can prevent the termination for the second time of a Jewish nation. The left on the other hand remains hopeful yet wary, is willing to take greater risks, remains idealistic and principled in terms of the linkage between socialism and Zionism, and pushes for concessions and compromises in hopes that one of the doors that might be opened may be the beginning to "Peace." The difference between left and right in Israel is more one of optimism versus pessimism. Unfortunately, in much of the rest of the Middle East the difference seems to be between that of fanaticism and moderation.

Our arrogance and military pride come directly from our feeling and belief that our survival is based upon realities like tanks and impressions like invincibility. Witness the Arab joy in finding out that they can launch a surprise attack on Yom Kippur with the full support of the USSR and for two days not be completely wiped out or condemned for such treachery. Witness the Arab joy at finding out that they can kill 2000 Israelis and only suffer maybe 20,000 losses. They have broken through this invincibility with which we had maybe too comfortably surrounded ourselves -- anyway the weapons of war have now made invincibility beyond humans. And witness as well the "trauma" now within Israel and persons

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within Israeli politics in realizing that a surprise attack was actually launched against us and we are apparently being faced with the dilemma of perpetual conflict (now with the pressure of negative world public opinion) or territorial compromises without a real peace which will mean increasingly more militarist policies since we would be forced to exist within a less acceptable and more fearful environment. To the Arabs on the other hand, does the recent war really mean that they have recovered part of their pride and now will be willing to make peace? Or, as is more likely and my regrettable conclusion, does it mean that they will now have renewed hope that strategy and tactics can lead them to the achievement of their perpetually stated goal which is the elimination of the Jewish State which they have now at times come to phase as the full restoration of the national rights of the Palestinians. History has become our only guide. U.N. resolutions, peace-keeping forces, international principles and "guarantees" -- all things that not too long ago were the focus of much Jewish intellectual energies -- have seemed to fail us and many others as well and we have apparently decided that maybe "realpolitik" offers more hope for peace, security and survival than does reliance on others who view the world in less dangerous and more idealistic terms. When you look at the world from Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, when you read the history of Arab attitudes toward Zionism, when you visit Arab capitals, when you view the tortured and mutilated bodies of defenseless Israeli prisoners-of-war, when you listen to the chants of the masses in Arab streets, the only rational conclusion that you can reach is that you cannot afford to accept vague promises based upon new theories of international affairs as the guarantees for your existence. From Israeli cities the world takes on dimensions far different than when your environment is like my charming vicinity of Princeton or when like you, you are burdened with the gigantic responsibilities of upholding the ideals and principles of internationalism as an officer of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. You and I have similar values and dreams, and I believe we have similar ends in mind in the Middle East -- but we have to understand better not only our similar dreams and desires but also our different fears and outlooks.

The issue in the Middle East is not 1967 boundaries. The issue is Zionism -- make no mistake about that. The conflict is between civilizations, ways-of-life, nationalisms, and psychological outlooks. The only possible resolution at a level less than war is tolerance and gradual acceptance and trust. Words like "peace" when thought of statically are nearly useless just as is the view that the matter can be dealt with by insisting upon territorial withdrawal by the Israelis -- even #242 goes significantly further than this territorial panacea. "Peace" will be a process or the sincerity of those who preach it will remain questionable and unconvincing. And the only reason I have any hope for this "process" is that rationally it has become apparent that war itself has outlived its usefulness through man's inventiveness. In earlier times, like the White Man in America wiped out the Indian, it would have probably been impossible for Jews to have survived in the Middle East. Now the world must realize that it is simply too dangerous to allow this logic to be fulfilled -- in a sense this is the trump card guaranteeing Israel's existence.

The current Algiers Declaration has again put forth the Arab viewpoint -- "The Arab world is passing through a decisive stage in its history. The struggle against Zionist invasion is a long-haul, historic responsibility that will require still further trials and sacrifices." As long as the Arab mind sees Zionism as an imperialist, colonialist, oppressive phenomena there will be and can be no peace, and as I have implied above, World War III will be more possible than otherwise. As long as "Zionism thus appears as a serious resurgence of the colonial system and its methods of domination and economic

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exploitation" the situation will be one of conflict and hostility and it would be madness bordering on suicide for Israel to accept, hoping history has been misread, the the now famous 2-step Arab plan to liquidate Zionism and the Jewish State. Now, of course, many of us are intelligent enough to understand and sensitive enough to appreciate the Arab hostility toward Zionism and the linkage of Zionism theoretically with imperialism and colonialism. Yet, world history is not as simple so as to fit everything neatly into these terms. Zionism is itself the manifestation of a successful movement for national liberation. Its origins are in anti-colonial and anti-imperialist theories and concepts. Of course we have made our mistakes and in certain areas gone astray. Of course we are willing to make compromises and to try to understand the other side. But we cannot compromise our existence. And if the choice is between historical reality and "realpolitik" or paper agreements based upon illusory principles we really have no choice at all. Today's NEW YORK TIMES has articles about Western Europe's fears, especially those of France, that within 5 or 10 years Russian military and psychological pressures upon all of Europe could result in the Finlandization of Europe -- especially if U.S. troops are substantially withdrawn. The French have felt it necessary to revise strategies for nuclear war and have begun again to publicly discuss the unthinkable, a possible Russian invasion of Europe leading either to full surrender or full nuclear war. Such stark alternatives are seen as making such Russian designs less thinkable to the new Czars. How much more justified are our legitimate fears -- not for Finlandization but for existence. Who came to our aid in those first days of the war and what reason is there to think the Arabs were planning to stop at the 1967 boundaries? The realities, a la Hans Morgenthau, deserve our fears as well as our courage; and our insistence upon real and lasting peace, not a peace whose overall aim is the creation of a more vulnerable, more fearful, and less viable Israel (and thus our unwillingness to confine our concerns to June 1967 or Oct. 22, 1973 boundaries), is in my opinion completely justified and deserving of the support of intelligent people of good will.

Where was the U.N. on October 6th and in the following few days? U Thant's seriously deficient and unsophisticated moves in 1967 come to mind. How can the Security Council be taken seriously when it adopts a role of military participant through its hypocritical decision to apply principles only to one side after 17 days and then to pretend that the important issue is whether the hour and minute of its cease-fire demand is observed? When the next round of fighting breaks out should we wait until the U.N. decides that enough Israelis have been killed knowing damn well that the Security Council will not respond until then or until we are destroying the forces that attacked us? I remain an internationalist. But the cloak of authority and power under the title "U.N." doesn't hide the fact that this organization continues to allow itself to become a participant in the struggle -- not an impartial high-principled arbiter acting independently and justly. A politicized U.N. unable to apply internationalism or think transnationally will become the enemy of its professed ideals. If war should break out again can we expect the U.N. to act against the aggressor -- or are we always the aggressors be it by striking to preempt or by striking to defend? Maybe the Israeli decision to wait and take it this time was a mistake, too big a concession to world opinion versus learned realities. One truly wonders where the U.N. would be if Israel's existence were again really immediately at stake. Even in 1948, with a favorable U.N. politically, only guns and our own struggle made Israel's existence a viable reality -- the U.N. helplessly watched and ignored the pleas of the State it had just help create.

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The Arab two-step plan is clear for all to see and understand if they are willing. Hitlers MEIN KAMPF was available as well. The latest Declaration from Algiers again makes the basic Arab position crystal clear: ". . . the process of Arab liberation. . . . 1. Evacuation by Israel of the occupied Arab territories, and first of all Jerusalem. 2. Re-establishment of the full national rights for the Palestinian people. So long as these two positions have not been met, it will be illusory to expect in the Middle East anything but a continuation of unstable and explosive situations and new confrontations."

How long can anyone compare Jerusalem under pre-1967 Arab rule (and from Jordan more could have been expected) with the free, open, and progressive situation of post-1967? How can you compare the use of the Wailing Wall for a latrine with the Israeli respect for holy shrines of all faiths? How can the use of Jewish grave stones for roads be compared with a thriving city open to the world?

How can those who refuse their own "brothers" any hope of settlement within the vast "Arab nation" talk of the rights of the Palestinians. "Full" rights for either Jews or Arabs is only the cover for no rights for one of these groups. How can the treatment of Jews in Egypt and Syria be compared with the treatment of Arabs in Israel? How can Arab handling of prisoners be compared with Israeli concern for each human life?

Please do not mistake my words or ideas. We in Israel have a long way to go in terminating discrimination and psychological racism. We in Israel have to recognize our obligations to the displaced Palestinians -- Golda Meir is wrong on this point. We in Israel have to deal better and more fairly with the inherent dual-class nature of a Jewish State administering a population of a Jewish majority and Arab minority. And I, as an "outsider" myself, and as an American Jew think we in Israel must strike a better balance between pragmatism and ideals. The social and humanitarian concerns of the Jewish people and the creation of a just society carry lasting importance. Just glance at the political landscape of Israel if you think we aren't aware of our problems and responsibilities. But if our existence is terminated our problems and responsibilities will not exist and if we are forced to the wall as Amos Kenon writes we can only respond by escaping from such a perilous situation. Both sides must mean about the same thing when they use the word "peace", and any lasting peace must be built upon a lasting foundation. Pressure from those who do not know the realities of the Middle East and from those who have idealistic notions and well-meaning ideas cannot be allowed to persuade us in the absence of tangible progress and concrete developments. Isolation can only increase our awareness that right now the only guarantee of our existence is our strength. Rather than helping the cause of peace the recent actions of such governments as Japan and the European Community (however understandable) will only fuel the Arab drive for eventual victory while causing an even greater inwardness and reluctance to compromise within Israel. The dynamics of peace require resoluteness and continuing alliances. Current developments are not in that direction. Yet, I assure you, it is we who will be the first to travel the road toward lasting peace when it exists and it is we who will fight as hard for progress along that road as we have fought along the Cairo-Suez road in time of war.

The conditions now put forward by the Arabs are nothing more than the quarter-century-old plan to eventually eliminate Israel from the Middle East. These two conditions are only the current version, and I admit a more sophisticated
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version, of unchanged Arab policies. Men of good will are now supposed to think that the Arabs simply and justly want some territories back while making it continually clear that only the intransigence and belligerence of Israel stands in the way of peace. Meanwhile within the Arab world condition number two receives the greatest attention as the Arabs outdo each other to assure everyone that the new two-step strategy will mean that condition two can be imposed by forces at some future date. Such policies are familiar. For over a quarter-century as well the Arab peoples through their governments have proclaimed to the outside world how concerned they are for the Palestinian people, yet they have let their "brothers" rot in filth refusing to better their conditions or allow them access to the larger society of the mythical "Arab nation". The oil riches flow to the feudal aristocracies but the Palestinians lie in the mud having no alternative but to turn to the gun and to the radicalism of leftist dreams. A policy of words and principles for the world gallery of public opinion and a policy of brutal inhumanity and complacency for the Middle East. I know Israelis who wept for the human suffering in 1970 when Jordan wiped out the Palestinians from its territories and in 1972 when the Lebanese army battles the Palestinian forces. I wonder if Arabs wept as well. Is there something about the Arab and Moslem psyche that can be described in our terms as "bloodthirsty?" Is there a psychological dimension to the concept of Holy War that accounts for what has been going on in the Middle East? I have been in Egypt and I have marveled at the civilization and at the culture. I have friends in Cairo whose sons and husbands are killing my Israeli friends. I do not in any way hate the Arabs -- but when the battle is raging I do wonder if they hate me. Cross-cultural understanding is the only key to peace in the Middle East but what do we do in the meantime and is it possible?

And, if as some people still insist, the real issue is really that of the post-1967 boundaries and the "occupied territories," how does one explain the 1967 war itself, which took place obviously before there were such territories, and the blood-curdling threats that emanated from every Arab capital in the weeks preceding the war when it was thought Israel was being strangled? Surely the nonsense of who fired the first shot and of "Israeli aggression" in the face of the 1967 developments cannot blind one to the fact that the issue then was the slow strangulation by capitulation or military response. I will even agree that Nassar did not want war -- but this was precisely because he knew he would be destroyed and couldn't possibly win. He did want Israel's destruction. If things have really changed then there must be an affirmation in deed as well as word. Instead we get the Algiers Declaration and talk about nuclear weapons!

I began this letter by explaining how we in Israel fear to fear. We will have to learn, if and when a real dynamic peace "process" begins, that the Arab Middle East is our home and we will have to accommodate ourselves to this reality as well as to our heritage. But we cannot under present circumstances make such progress in this task when our enemies have forced us to perpetuate the self-fulfilling battles of hostility and irresolvable conflict. And I strongly believe that we will be less and less able to deal with the issues and priorities that could lead to a de-escalation of this hatred and fear if those men of good will throughout the world isolate us and turn us either out of their own selfish self-interest or because they allow themselves to believe that it is we the Israelis who are the enemy of a true peace, that it is we who have in our hands the keys to turning Arab-Jewish hostility along the paths of cooperation, that it is we who will not meet the reasonable Arab demands by returning to earlier cease-fire lines from which we were earlier forced by threats to our existence. Would you, if you were the Prime Minister of Israel, return to lines within the context of today's military technology and present world political

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conditions, which would place Arab guns at the very hearts of your major cities, Arab guns over the hills controlling your kibbutzim, and Arab armies along indefensible borders? Would you accept and rely upon U.N. "guarantees" and U.S. pledges in view of historical developments and current political conditions? Is it not the process rather by necessity a gradual one and is not the willingness to accept a gradual approach the real test of sincerity? Is it not real peace by necessity a dynamic process: territories for signs of acceptance, military demilitarizations and disarmament, secure borders plus guarantees; deescalation of hatred and hostility internally as well as externally (domestically in what the Arab leaders tell their own people as well as what is said for international public opinion) for cooperation as regards Palestinian refugees; etc. Only a dynamic and a gradual peace is possible and meaningful. The explosive possibilities otherwise make any other approach to peace not only unlikely to succeed but possibly the road to even more devastating conflict and the future involvement of other states in the Middle East quagmire.

We have just lost 1856 men and thousands of others will be scared for their lifetimes. With our population we have suffered a tremendous catastrophe. We have just been forced to kill thousands of young Arabs sent to kill us by their fanatical leaders and the passions instilled in them since they were born. We have just allowed ourselves to be maneuvered into the position where we feared more the reactions of our friends if we struck preemptively or even if we mobilized then we feared an Arab strike. Remember those guarantees of 1970 when the War of Attrition ended? Remember how the very moment the agreement began the Arabs moved their forces and their Russian missiles up to the canal in direct violation of the agreement? Those were the missiles and forces that drew our blood less than three years later. Now, we are asked to let the Arab armies de facto or de jure along with the Russian bear move again closer to our borders without a real "process" of peace. What can possibly be our answer?

Come to Israel and see the reaction to our dead and hear and see the reaction of young Israelis who have been forced to kill young Arabs. Read THE SEVENTH DAY written by Kibbutz soldiers after the last war in 1967. Then go to Cairo and Damascus and see if the talk is of mourning and the horror of war -- rather I am afraid you will hear questioning of why the war wasn't continued and the glory of fighting for the sake of fighting.

I hope you will find this letter responsive to the discussion we had on the Middle East. I believe that we share most goals and outlooks and that you could give me and possibly I deserve a good lecture on internationalism and the absolute necessity to move toward world peace. Till we have the chance to further discuss these issues, I send you my best and warmest regards.

Most sincerely,

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ZIONISM UNDER SIEGE

by Mark Bruzonsky
and Israel Singer

Israel is a state which belongs nowhere because it comes from nowhere.

--Lebanese UNESCO delegate,
21 November 1974

They have decided that Israel does not have the right to exist; therefore she does not exist. This spiritual abolition of Israel justifies in advance her physical annihilation. It is the extermination process perfected by the totalitarian systems of the twentieth century.

--Jean-Paul Sartre, et. al.

Reporters descended upon Kilometer 101. Egyptians and Israelis were engaged in disengaging. For some this drama signaled the earliest beginnings of an uneasy co-existence between the Jewish State and the most important of the Arab states. Many see in the recent second-stage Sinai agreement further reason for cautious hope. The Middle East has apparently come to its senses.

Nevertheless, planning for war proceeds on all sides. This is a realization overlooked at grave peril. The Middle East is simply, it can be argued, in the midst of another truce. Ever since the

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ZIONIST
COMMENTS 1970

1948 war, truce periods have been preparatory periods, And the preparations go on not only at the military level. Political and psychological conditioning are weapons in themselves. And the entire world has become the chess board. WASHINGTON POST columnist Stephen S. Rosenfeld earlier this year termed current developments "The Mideast 'War' for U.S. Opinion".* President Sadat's U.S. visit has brought this theme even more into the open. Now the immense importance of world opinion and of superpower support are recognized as key determinants of the actual outcome of battlefield confrontations, wars of words, slogans and images have taken on added significance.**

The post-Yom Kippur War period has, in this context, been marked by far more than shuttle diplomacy. The Arab campaign to de-legitimize Zionism--which is by definition Jewish nationalism and consequently the very raison d'etre of the State of Israel--must be considered one of the most ominous signs forecasting further Arab onslaughts. The truce of October 1973, may at any moment collapse. As long as the efforts to fan the flames of a new anti-Semitism and to undermine the existence of Israel continue, Israel remains a nation under siege.

A Long-Haul Historic Responsibility

Immediately after the Yom Kippur War's guns were silenced, the Arab states revealed in Algiers a declaration of perpetual animosity. "The Arab world is passing through a decisive stage in its history," the Algiers Declaration stated. "The struggle against Zionist invasion is a long-haul historic responsibility that will require still further trials and sacrifices."

This was a declaration of perpetual war on Zionism which replaced the post-Six Day War resolution at Khartoum which proclaimed: "No negotiations, no recognition, no peace." This declaration in Algiers was in fact to become the opening round to two years -- so far -- of scathing attacks on the very idea of Jewish nationalism and a Jewish State. Under cover of this slandering of Jewish national existence a campaign of periodic warfare could become "justifiable". The Arabs apparently are even hoping that future warfare against "Zionism" can be actually be said to be sanctioned by majority vote of the United Nations and other international institutions. Only the blind will

* 28 March 1975. See also Theodore Draper, "The United States and Israel: **Tilt in the Middle East," COMMENTARY, April 1975.

fail to appreciate that today's attack on "Zionism" is the same as yesterday's assault on "Israel." The barrage is against the existence of any Jewish State in the Middle East, not on whatever set of specific boundaries the state exists within. This is the significance of the debate on "Zionism" this year in the General Assembly of the misnamed "United" Nations. For if Zionism is racism and if erasure of racism is legitimate, in this context, neo-anti-Semitism disguised as anti-Zionism is a hideous feature of contemporary international society.

These two years of psychological warfare at first caught Israel as unprepared as had the Yom Kippur War. The shockwaves of October had not even subsided before the new diplomatic and political-psychological challenges began repeatedly to storm Israel's position and standing in the international community.

In November 1973 at the meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, the African nations for the first time denounced "World Zionism" urging "solidarity with the Palestine people." Between 1971 to October 1973, 15 African nations had broken relations with Israel. Nine did so during the war, and 10 have done so since. The Algiers Declaration soon followed. Newspaper advertisements began appearing in American dailies. (One, for instance, signed by the Minister of State of Saudi Arabia, announced, after wishing the American people a Happy New Year, "We lived in Palestine for two thousand years and when we resisted displacement by a foreign state the Americans branded us aggressors.")

In April of 1974 the Security Council of the U.N. condemned Israeli retaliation against PLO camps without even mentioning the barbaric provocation at Kiryat Shimona. The U.S. too was caught unprepared and uncertain. For the first time she failed to cast a veto on such a blatantly political resolution -- something now unthinkable with Daniel Moynihan as the new U.S. Representative. Two months later the Islamic Foreign Ministers meeting in Kuala Lumpur "decided to continue Jihad for the liberation of the Holy City of Jerusalem". A year later the Sixth Foreign Ministers meeting the formal call to expel Israel from the U.N. was to prompt determined U.S. efforts to prevent such a catastrophe -- in 1974, no U.S. response at all.

Of course, the appearance of the PLO at the U.N. General Assembly session in the fall of 1974 climaxed the Arab plot to de-legitimize Zionism and make Israel an international pariah. In Arafat's speech however, much he spoke of was dreams and olive branches, a call for

the "replacement" the sanitized euphemism for Israel's destruction. Arafat, relative of Nazi-collaborator Hajj Amin el-Husseni, seemed determined to carry out the once-Mufti of Jerusalem's unyielding policies. What was most frightful, however, was not the Arafat charade, but the unrestrained glee with which the assembled international society applauded. And then of course, in November, the well-publicized UNESCO actions brought a culmination to the first year of Arab psychological warfare.

The Tone Was Clearly Defensive

Ambassador Tekoah's October, 1973, U.N. speech rightly insisting that Zionism too is a movement for national liberation was a rather defensive beginning to the first year of rhetorical battle. As the Ambassador then said, "It was not my intention to speak at this stage of the meeting; the statement delivered by the representative of Saudi Arabia compels me, however, to do so." But Tekoah went on to give one of his most-quoted speeches. Nevertheless, the motivations and tone were clearly defensive. (see Ambassador Tekoah's speech in this issue.)

Until recent months, in fact, both Israel and the U.S. had not fully grasped the implications of the vilification campaign to make Zionism something of an international outlaw. But during this second year of assault, both countries have counterattacked. When the "Arab grand design"* became evident both the U.S. and Israel have been able to respond with considerable force and conviction. The events of this second year which led to the counterattacks have been numerous and until recently the momentum appeared likely to result in either sanctions or suspension at the U.N.

When the Thieu regime fell in South Vietnam there was considerable symbolism when the Israeli Embassy was taken over by the PLO. A month or two before the PLO had become the first non-governmental organization to be listed in the official U.N. "Blue Book" -- in effect a statement of U.N. recognition of the PLO as something akin to a government-in-exile. In May, 1975 the UNESCO Executive Board further acted against Israel effectively barring her from two conferences (one in 1975 and one in 1976) of Mediterranean countries where treaties assuring mutual recognition of university diplomas are to be drafted. This move recalled how in 1974 the newly created U.N. Economic Commission for Western Asia (Middle East) became the first regional Economic Commission to refuse membership to a State in the region. Also in May, the World Health Organization,

*For an extensive summary of the post-UNESCO Arab initiatives see William Korey, "The Arab Grand Design," MIDSTREAM, Oct. 1975, p. 8.

(WHO) urged cooperation with the PLO -- WHO was prevented from sanctioning Israel only by advance protest from half a dozen U.S. Senators, 45 Congressman, and a purposeful delay by the Senate Foreign Relation Committee in approving U.S. funding for WHO. In June, the International Labor Organization (ILO) did grant official status to the PLO and the U.S., under prodding from AFL-CIO President George Meany, is currently taking steps to leave the ILO.

A little discussed but rather significant development took place at the ILO meeting. Gideon Ben-Israel of Israel was elected to the 24-man ILO Governing Board at the same time that an Algerian was defeated. The explanation is simple but revealing. Unlike the usual contemporary procedures in international forums, this vote was by secret ballot. Many countries took the opportunity to challenge Arab "petrodollar diplomacy," which one African U.N. delegate recently indicated ties Arab support for Africa "to black Africa's willingness to line up solidly with the Arabs against Israel..."*

Another little known development took place during the summer. Two of four preparatory meetings for the 1976 Montreal conference on urban problems voted to recommend exclusion of Israel from the event. And then in July at the International Womens Year Conference the campaign to make Zionism something for all the Third World to struggle against reached its peak. At this Mexico City conference -- where the Arabs led a walkout when Mrs. Rabin spoke -- a major U.N. gathering actually called for the elimination of Zionism. And in the final vote only the U.S. and Israel registered their opposition! The perfidious passage reads:

Women as well as men together should eliminate colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism, foreign domination and occupation, Zionism, apartheid, racial discrimination, the acquisition of land by force and the recognition of such acquisition, since such practices reflect incalculable suffering on women, men and children.

The post-Yom Kippur war of words had reached a new apogee. Israel's suspension from the U.N. appeared to be a growing possibility. (see a commentary of the Women's Conference in this issue.)

But the Mexico City travesty and then what took place later that same month at the Sixth Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference in Jidda
*See "Black Africans at U.N. Question Extent and Motives of Arab Aid," in New York Times, 23 October 1975

provoked a carefully coordinated U.S.-Israel counterattack which has had increasing effect. Before the opening of the U.N. session two occurrences blunted the Arab design even though the Arab states appeared so self-assured that in Jidda they called unequivocally for Israel's expulsion from the U.N. and for all nations "to sever their political, cultural, and diplomatic relations with Israel."*

Escalate.... Isolate....

The first development, one previewed by the secret vote at the ILO, came as Third World nations began to bolt from petrodollar imperialism and black-mail. At the OAU meeting in Kampala, Uganda, in late July the call for Israel's expulsion from the U.N. was surprisingly rejected. In March, 1974, Egypt's Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy had indicated that "It is inevitable that we escalate the campaign of isolating and rejecting Israel from the international community and from the U.N." and on 20 July, 1975, the Jidda resolutions were buttressed with a joint Saudi Arabian-Egyptian communique endorsing the call for Israel's expulsion. Egypt, however, was feeling in Kampala the pressure of the U.S.-Israel counterattack in addition to the defections of a growing number of Third World governments. Mexico City was a climax that could not be repeated. A month after Kampala, in fact, at the Conference of Non-Aligned that took place in Lima, Peru -- a conference the Arabs had long looked to as the appropriate warm-up for the coming General Assembly session -- the Arabs had to settle for a call for Security Council imposition of sanctions under Chapter 7 of the Charter, clearly only a rhetorical blast with a U.S. veto a certainty.

Face - Saving Gesture

In a sense, all of the discussion about the Zionism equals racism resolution (which will probably be passed by the General Assembly in December even though at the time of this writing support is eroding) is somewhat anti-climatic. The very proposal of this resolution was largely a face-saving gesture. The campaign to bring about U.N. sanctions against Israel or Israeli suspension from the General Assembly a la the action taken against South Africa in 1974 has failed. *Another little known development is that this conference also set up a permanent 13 state committee (including the PLO) to conduct a global campaign to make Jerusalem "once again, Arab, free, pure and dedicated to Allah and the faith." So much for even the ludicrous attempt to convince public opinion of the democratic, secular state proposition.

The most interesting developments at the 1975 U.N. session are not Arab tactics but rather the forcefulness and determination with which Israel and the U.S. have gone from strictly defense to a counteroffensive.

A Matter of Time

About the time TIME MAGAZINE detailed the whos and hows of "Pushing the Arab Cause in America,"* statements of what America should do if Israeli expulsion or suspension actually come about were becoming abundant. Arthur Goldberg, John Scali and then Pat Moynihan at his confirmation hearing as U.S. Representative to the U.N. all made press headlines. When it became clear that the Arab campaign was gathering momentum at Jidda, Secretary Kissinger spoke out, warning of the "empty shell" the U.N. could become. Resolutions sponsored by a majority in each chamber of the Congress addressed the issue. Jewish organizations joined the counteroffensive and gathered an impressive list of former U.S. Ambassadors to the U.N. who joined in an open statement to Secretary-General Waldheim indicating that should Israeli suspension occur "The U.N. would be severely impaired and its complete disintegration only a matter of time."**

What happened at the OAU session in Kampala and then in Lima cannot solely be attributed to the forcefulness with which Israel and the U.S. counterattacked during 1975, but there can be little doubt that the sense of determination, the patient explanations, as well as the unmistakable threats all played a special role in reversing the thrust of the Arab drive for a major political victory. The Arabs may have helped defeat their own plans by over-playing their hand; coercing, bribing and blackmailing become tiresome and especially so after pay-offs are delayed or not forthcoming.

For the U.S., the spectre of a UN. promoting economic nationalizations without compensation, failing to condemn the most brutal forms of international terrorism, calling for the liquidation of member states, and breathing life into new forms of anti-Semitism, finally became something of a nightmare.

When the Arabs retreated to a resolution which would have little

* 23 June 1975, pp. 17, 20.

** The text is available from the Institute of Human Relations of the American Jewish Committee.

practical effect but immense importance psychologically, first Moynihan, then the Secretary of State, and then the President himself all elevated the matter of Zionism's inclusion in the anti-racism resolution to one of major national and international importance. "An obscene act" puffed Moynihan, still accepting applause for his Idi Amin truths, while the President restrained himself to fully supporting his U.N. Ambassador and deplored "in the strongest terms" the resolution.

The Congress meanwhile acted swiftly. In the House, an unprecedented 433 sponsors at the time of this writing have endorsed a resolution condemning the Third Committee's resolution and urging its defeat by the General Assembly. In the Senate, a similar resolution has already been approved by voice vote and Senators Javits and Stone have threatened a cut-off of U.N. funding should the resolution be passed.

Israel, too, has unleashed a counterattacking war of words. U.N. Ambassador Chaim Herzog has worked strenuously. In a sense the Third Committee vote itself was an indication of his considerable effectiveness, which may explain Ambassador Moynihan's embrace of Herzog as the vote was tallied. In Mexico City, the U.S. and Israel were actually alone in opposing the final resolution while on this vote, 27 other countries voted opposed and another 27 abstained with 16 absent -- this in a body where 74 of the 142 states do not even have diplomatic relations with Israel! Even should the resolution finally pass the General Assembly -- and notably Yugoslavia and Chile have already announced changed positions (Yugoslavia backing tabling of the resolution and Chile planning either to abstain or vote against) -- a sizeable opposition vote is now assured and will be something of a pay-off for the successful counteroffensive only recently begun.

In addition to Herzog, Foreign Minister Allon in his 30 September remarks to the General Assembly made Israel's determination to resist all attempts at slandering Zionism unequivocal. And he set the tone for the new U.S.-Israel policy of direct confrontation on all blatantly political or one-sided resolutions. "We are assaulted every year," Allon trumpeted

in language so venomous and vile as to defy all canons of civilized behaviour. In assembly after assembly in recent years, in conference after conference, resolutions are adopted by automatic majorities, demanding we submit to this abusive tyranny, that we, in effect, dismember our state, that we

commit national suicide. No regard whatsoever is paid in these resolutions to truth or to reality.

Do Not Plan To Live In Peace

The new forcefulness which both Herzog and Allon have exemplified should awaken all Jews to the opportunity lurking in this situation of continual political-psychological warfare. Just as the Arabs have tried unsuccessfully to separate Jews from Zionists, they are now attempting to draw distinctions between Israel and Zionism. Apparently the public talk of coexistence with Israel does not have to be matched (they have concluded) with a willingness to coexistence with "Zionism."* The Arab countries are trying to have it both ways --attempting to convince world public opinion that they are willing to live with Israel if only Israel would give back the occupied territories, and continuing to insist that "Zionism" is an evil that must be destroyed and thereby their own talk of peace and compromise.

As a consequence of this contradictory approach on the part of the Arabs, the opportunity created for Jews is two-fold. First, Israel is a Jewish State and that Zionism is the raison d'etre of our state as well as the absolutely legitimate national liberation movement of the Jewish people. Since the Arab states continue to condemn Zionism, it is clear they do not plan to live in peace with the Jewish State of Israel whatever her boundaries. Consequently, the demands for Israel to return territories to the Arab states or to the Palestinians are premature and unreasonable. Even U.N. Resolution #242 calls for territorial return only in exchange for real peace and security. Israel seeks peace and is ready to discuss return of territories, but a minimal condition is a true Arab willingness to coexist with Israel, and this means a willingness to accept Zionism. As Stephen Rosenfeld remarked in the WASHINGTON POST after Sadat's outburst on Zionism at the National Press Club in Washington, "Is it not inconsistent to accept the actual existence of Israel as a state but to denounce the doctrine which expresses Jews' claim to a state of their own?"**

* According to Sadat, at the National Press Club in Washington on 28 October, 1975, "We are not against Jews but we are against Zionism.

** "Sadat's Lesson In 'Moderation'," WASHINGTON POST, 31 October 1975.

It should further be pointed out that the issue of the Palestinians has been distorted by Arab apologists as well. The problem is not Israeli unwillingness to recognize the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people, but Palestinian and Arab unwillingness to recognize the rights and aspirations of the Jewish people. This was the reason for the Arab attack on Israel in 1948 and this sad truth formed the basis for the stranglehold the Arab states tried to administer in 1967. The campaign to de-legitimize Zionism is only proof that little has basically changed. As Foreign Minister Allon also said in his recent speech before the General Assembly, "If the matter at issue is a fair and constructive solution for the problem of Palestinian identity, Israel's response is emphatically positive." But unfortunately Allon knows that the basic issue is not recognition of Palestinian identity, but acceptance of Jewish national identity. Lack of such acceptance is the primary underlying reason for the Arab campaign to de-legitimize and isolate Zionism, and for the content as well of Arafat's address in 1974.

Little Experience

The second aspect of the opportunity the Arab assault on Zionism presents Jews has to do with what Zionism actually is. What the Arabs have done is provide a receptive atmosphere into which Jews can now emit to all the world the real facts and explanations about Zionism. How unfortunate that Mayor Beame in New York didn't have the skill to cordially welcome President Sadat to the United States while publicly taking the opportunity to give him a few comments about Zionism. In Saudi Arabia, visitors are given "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion", in New York Sadat could have been given a copy of Arthur Hertzberg's THE ZIONIST IDEA.

For many nations and individuals, Zionism is a term only heard in connection with racism, colonialism, and imperialism. They have little experience with Jews or anti-Semitism and hardly any with Zionism. Barry Rubin is right in pointing out that the votes of various states at the U.N. do not actually stem from anti-Semitism. They can be much more readily explained by Arab tactics such as trading votes on matters dear to African nations for African support on Middle East matters, and by Arab petrodollar enticements

* See footnotes - next page

and blackmail campaigns, "Our failure in the U.N., "writes Yoseph Lapid in Mauriv, "is not the result of anti-Semitic conspiracy or of the breakdown of international ethics. . . The Third World nations -- Asia and Africa -- do not know at all what anti-Semitism is",* . . . or what Zionism is for that matter.

Of course some nations can be singled out for the manner in which they treat their Jewish citizens. And there are, of course, some Arab states which would like nothing better than to give rise to a neo-anti-Semitism, especially in the U.S. But on the whole, the Arab campaign to de-legitimize Zionism has succeeded through more realpolitik political and economic techniques. A contributing factor until recently has been the slowness with which both Israel and the U.S. have counterattacked.



(* from p. 13) Three interesting books recently published illuminate the overall Arab attitude toward Israel and Zionism. See John Laffin, THE ARAB MIND (Cassell, London: 1975 -- to be published in the U.S. by Taplinger); Gil Carl Alroy, BEHIND THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT, THE REAL IMPASSE BETWEEN ARABS AND JEWS (Capricorn, N.Y.: 1975); and Albert Memmi, JEWS AND ARABS (O'Hara, Chicago: 1975). Also, Joan Peters, "In Search of Moderate Egyptians," COMMENTARY, May 1975, p. 57.

* Quoted in Barry Rubin, "Jews, Israel, and the Third World," WORLDVIEW, July/Aug 1975, p. 28.

ZIONISM AND INTERNATIONALISM:
NECESSARILY IN OPPOSITION?

The Basic Ideological Schism:

"Important periods of history are characterized by the circumference within which the sympathy of man extends Beginning with the nineteenth century in the Western world and with the twentieth century in the Orient, the circumference was set by nationality But the circumference of sympathy need not remain forever drawn as it is today. With the transformation of social and economic life, with the growing interdependence of all nationalities on a shrinking earth, with a new direction to education, the circumference may widen to include supranational areas of common interest and common sympathy. Such an extension of solidarity, should it come, will arise only as a result of a struggle of unprecedented dimensions."

Hans Kohn¹

Jewish nationalism was one of the first and is one of the last. Dispersed nearly two millennia ago and productive of many of the world's greatest humanists, internationalists, and revolutionaries, the Jewish people returned to political nationalism at a time when the nation-state itself was under severe challenge as archaic and unresponsive to human progress. Socialist internationalism had laid claim to the "progressive" mantle. At the ideological level, debate for Jewish minds and allegiance between promoters of Zionism and advocates of internationalism has been ever-present. Still, Zionism succeeded.

In the 1970's Zionism is challenged in many circles less as an atavistic, tribal mentality and more for its alleged association with imperialism, colonialism, and racism. Whenever "progressive" groups gather of late, they manage to insert into their declarations condemnations of Israel's ideological raison d'etre. Even at the International Women's Year U.N. conference in the summer of 1975 in Mexico City, the final declaration trumpeted:

"Women as well as men together should eliminate colonialism, neo colonialism, imperialism, foreign domination and occupation, Zionism, apartheid, racial discrimination, the acquisition of land by force and the recognition of such acquisition, since such practices reflect incalculable suffering on women, men and children."

While significant political progress in the Middle East is at least arguable, in regards to the Arab State at least, the brutal and relentless ideological attack upon Israel seems to be escalation.

Even with what some see as political moderation in some quarters of the Arab world ("moderate" relative to the past, that is), Israel's existence remains seriously challenged. No matter what agreements might be reached in coming years, Israel is ever more cast as an outcast, the Arabs ever more alert for weakness and signs of isolation. The wild applause for gun-totting Yassir Arafat at the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1974 was indicative of the mass hysteria anti-Zionism is capable of unleashing. To many Jews, anti-Zionism is a sugar coating for an anti-semitism all too well known.

Even though Israel's creation a quarter-century ago symbolized the decline of leftist-inspired Jewish anti-Zionism, the Jewish internationalist is still most prone to be influenced by the ideological slanders designed to delegitimize Zionism. The ideological campaign to link Zionism with reactionary and conservative attitudes is a major aspect of the current world-wide Arab public relations offensive. Parallels between Israel and Vietnam are politically fallacious, but made as Israel's bitterest opponents attempt the well financed international isolation of the Jewish State.

For these two reasons -- the Arab-led propaganda campaign and the susceptibility of Jewish universalists to anti-Zionist leftist slander -- Zionists must understand the need to re-think the presentation of their own nationalist credo. As military strength will deter further Arab military provocations, so ideological strength will cause an eventual end to Arab dreaming for an eventual triumph over the Jews and their State.

The developments of increased propaganda and its consequential effects should not throw Zionists totally onto the defensive: political and economic pressures can be blamed to a considerable extent for the world-wide anti-Zionist rhetoric, rather

¹Hans Kohn, THE IDEA OF NATION M (Collier, N.Y.: 1967), pp. 21-22.

current thoughts on
selected issues

ZIONIST COMMENTS

about this issue...

"Women as well as men together should eliminate colonialism, neocolonialism, imperialism, foreign domination and occupation, Zionism, apartheid, racial discrimination, the acquisition of land by force and the recognition of such acquisition, since such practices reflect incalculable suffering on women, men and children."

-- from the Declaration passed in June at the U.N. World Conference of International Women's Year in Mexico City by an 89-2 vote with 18 abstentions.

Arab grievances against Israel are one thing. World condemnation of Jewish political independence another. The ignorance and hypocrisy reflected by the world bodies can hardly be excused even if political pressures, and in some cases, humanistic motivations can be an explanation.

ZIONIST COMMENTS is not a polemical journal. We believe, however, that enlightened consideration of Zionist history and ideology is the most useful way of responding to the current campaign to deligitimize Zionism and prepare the way for Israel's eventual "replacement" by another Moslem State.

This first issue of ZIONIST COMMENTS deals with the theme Zionism and Internationalism. The feature article reviews the historical opposition of these two creeds but concludes they need not be opposites in today's setting. Other articles include an essay by Martin Buber on Nationalism, which reflects another perspective on Zionism and internationalism; an article by Muki Tzur which originally appeared in THE SEVENTH DAY and the official response by the Foreign Office on the recent Arab-Israeli accord reached over the Sinai.

Letters and comments are appreciated and will be printed in most instances. All comments should be addressed to ZIONIST COMMENTS
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We hope you like ZIONIST COMMENTS and will let us know as to your reactions and interests to be reflected in future writings.

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ZIONIST
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The religious and secular Jewish commitment to both particularism and universalism has caused Jews to struggle with Zionism. It is a matter of choosing priorities and identification. The priorities of the left are considered by the left completely unethical to those of the nationalist right. The left has chosen worldwide struggle to create a new world order and identification with human solidarity. Zionists choose the "right wing pursuit" of ethnic loyalty and national priorities. There is no middle road or so we are to believe.

It is tempting to believe that what is so guiling to the internationalist left today is that the Jew, once the foremost ally of socialist internationalism, has chosen nation over class, pragmatism over ideology. This is only a part of an explanation for contemporary attitudes, though.

For those who identify with the socialist Marxist left, acceptance of Zionism has always been difficult, though not impossible as Hashomer Hatzair indicates in its long history. Those coming from the Marxist left understandably have found Zionism contradictory with the revolutionary vision of a new world society: Zionism aimed not at class struggle or overthrow of capitalism, but at National Jewish solidarity. While the concept of an historical identity for the Jew was politically tolerable to the left, the idea of nationalism for the Jew as not. In this sense, little has changed. Behind today's political and economic rationalizations for worldwide attitudes toward Zionism -- oil, money, third-world solidarity, opposition to U.S. influence -- there remains a fundamental schism between universalist Jews and Zionists. The left sees the world in terms of classes, not nation-states, and it sees the future in terms of human solidarity, not national sovereignty. It insists upon, at least ideologically, human solidarity, not ethnic identification.

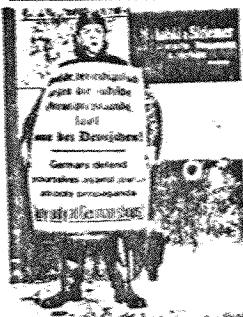
Proposed and supported by many Jews, socialist internationalism was the optimistic countercurrent at the turn of the century to Zionism. Socialists saw the coming revolution sweeping away the old order and eventually the withering away of the coercive state system altogether. Zionists forecast a long, tortuous road toward social, political, and economic change. They (the Zionists) expressed extreme pessimism about class identification. In so doing, Zionism from its inception was linked with counter-revolutionary thinking. In today's world, Zionism is an "ism" and said to be aligned against all progressive ideas.

At the strictly ideological level, internationalists cannot help but be alien and hostile to Zionism. Zionism is a pragmatic, responsive concept resulting from the way the world proved to be. Socialist internationalism is utopian and hastens the creation of a world that should be. Priorities are at polar ends for the Zionist and the Jewish internationalist, or so it seems. To a large extent, Zionists have increasingly become skeptical of the romantic visions expounded by the ideologues, while socialists find baffling the commitment to Zionism of otherwise progressive Jews.

In the 1970's, a Zionist can be radical in theory (since his priorities must be Jewish survival and prosperity, not Trotsky's "permanent revolution" or the alienated radical's perceptions of Marx's thoughts on theoretical struggle between capitalism and socialism). When the fight for existence is real, the theoretical struggles for utopia are not very compelling -- especially after one surveys the fruits of leftist victories in the 20th century.

It would be mistaken to dismiss as strictly politically inspired the growth of anti-Zionism in recent years. The old ideological battles are beginning to be refought. Jewish internationalists condemn Zionism for pulling Jews away from the world-wide struggles for human emancipation and liberty as Jewish organizations emphasize a love of Zionism based on fear for the future years. While Elie Wiesel tells Jews "Our history has unfortunately taught us to put more faith in threats than in promises," attempting a justification for fortress Israel, a Jewish labor publication proclaims that the solution to the "so-called Jewish problem.... must lie in fighting for the fulfillment of the universalist vision -- a liberated world." *

*Gabriel Ross, "Zionism and the Jewish Radical," p. 313 in Porter and Drier (eds.), Jewish Radicalism, (Grove Press in NY, 1972)



The Nazi boycott of Jewish shops, Berlin, June 1933.



Capt. Alfred Dreyfus being stripped of his military rank after he was unjustly convicted of espionage (1895). The affair was so celebre in the question of anti-Semitism Dreyfus was later ex-honored.

than profound ideological hostility to Jewish nationalism. Moreover, the philosophy of Zionism is and always has been open to debate and dispute. After a nearly century-long debate, there should be a basic confidence that Zionism is a positive, constructive, and progressive creed. For much of the past century, Jews have tortured themselves with justifications, denunciations, contradictions and dilemmas inspired at first by the very concept of Jewish nationalism and later by the successful return of Jews to political independence. Zionism has been indeed, a dynamic and dialectical development. It has been a participant in history -- its ideas tested by the realities taking place. And, there has been considerable more historical validation to Zionism than to socialist internationalism.

For Israel and the Jewish people, the basic intellectual and existential controversy remains as it has always been: what is the meaning of a Jewish State and Zionism? Only a small percentage of Jews have accepted "true" Zionism (meaning Aliyah) from the free western world. Others, while supporting Israel politically and coming to her aid in times of crisis, remain uneasy and troubled. Questions abound from every circle in regards to the State the Zionist movement began and continues to "feed". Though some Jews are defensive about having to ideologically defend Zionism, contemporary developments make it more necessary than before to develop sophisticated "Zionist" perspectives on world issues and on the meaning of Jewish nationalism. Condemnations will probably escalate as the campaign to isolate Israel gathers momentum. The boundary between explaining Zionism and defending it is unclear. Yet, Zionists should realize that this ideological battle can be approached with considerable self-assurance,

The Right-Left Polarization:

"In their classic versions, liberalism and marxism embody the assurance and hopes, the ambiguities and fears of the modern age. Taken in all of their varieties, they now constitute our major, even our only, political alternatives."

C. Wright Mills

The triumvirate of isms -- racism, imperialism, and colonialism -- is the vocabulary of the left. In the United States, many Jewish internationalists (especially those of New Left origins) are influenced to a great degree by the linkage of Zionism with these negative-"isms". In contrast to these pejorative expressions, the left has consistently championed, somewhat paradoxically, both internationalism and self-determination.*

Zionism (a nationalist creed) versus Internationalism (a world-wide perspective) is but a subtopic of the larger debate between liberalism and marxist socialism. The origins of both debates are firmly rooted in the Jewish history of the past century, as is the internal debate over the real meaning of Zionism. The same Jewish history which produced Marx, Trotsky and Freud, produced Herzl, Weizmann and Ben-Gurion as well.

Whether approached in terms of the particularism-universalism dichotomy, or the nationalism-humanism confusion, the tension between an ethnic priority and a world vision is ever-present for Zionists as it is for all Jews. It is telling that in many of the most nationalist circles in Israel, the word "cosmopolitan" is often substituted for the word "internationalist". Ben-Gurion spoke of the "rootless cosmopolitan," insisting "there can be nothing worse. . ."

In doing so, however, he denied the Jewish history that offered associations, with humanism, internationalism and cosmopolitanism.

²C. Wright Mills, THE MARXISTS (Dell, N.Y. 1971) page 13.

* The paradox might be simply explained: whenever self-determination is seen as a step toward internationalism, it is supported; whenever self-determination goes forward under its actual colors it is questionable. As Sol Stern writes, "The movement gets into such absurd positions because of its considerable confusion on the role of nationalism. Since the left is committed ideologically to an internationalist perspective, it follows that there is something reactionary about nationalism. The contradiction is that some militant nationalisms are seen as a prelude to anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist struggles. Thus the left has fallen in the trap of approving selectively only those nationalisms which engage loudly in anti-imperialist rhetoric, whatever the reality."³ The reality, of course, is that compared to any other Middle East country, and to most world-wide, Zionism is far more socialist. It has been said that per capita the largest concentration of Marxists in the world is in Israel.

³Sol Stern, "My Jewish Problem -- and Ours," p. 364 in Porter and Drier (eds.), JEWISH RADICALISM (Grove Press, N.Y. 1972)

With Nazism's take-over of Europe and the consequent horrors of World War II, Jewish opposition to the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine gave way. The stream of refugees seeking escape from the past created an immediate and practical reason for supporting Zionism on a humanistic rather than ideological plane. Moreover, there was not a political conflict between internationalism and Zionism, no matter how much the ideological contradictions inherent in their two ideas remained. Woodrow Wilson had indeed opened the doors to linking movements for national political identity with the entire world community. And ever since the League of Nations and later the United Nations, internationalism and nationalism have been less at odds -- at least for liberals.



The U.N. did, of course, support Jewish self-determination further diminishing the political contradictions between Zionism and internationalism in the late 1940's. The Soviet Union, to the great surprise of many until political motives were recognized, was even more Zionist than its chief supporting party in Israel. Only feudal Arab reactionaries stood in unyielding opposition to Zionism and they hardly represented the ideal of universalism.

By 1948, most anti-Zionist Jews had become neutral and most non-Zionists had become pragmatic advocates. Jews were compelled to embrace a nation-state of their own by the failure of so many of the optimistic visions held by progressive forces prior to the two wars. Those who had before opposed the idea of a Jewish nation were in many cases shocked into acceptance; others were simply convinced of the necessity to create a place for Jewish self-sufficiency and self-expression.

Wide support for Israel's creation stretched across ideological and political divisions. The history of the 20th century had fueled the Zionist program transcending for the time-being political and ideological disputes. Jewish nationalism seemed to all but the Arabs a completely reasonable response to events. Only a small number of Jews actively opposed Zionism's fruition.* Only in the Arab world did opposition to Zionism remain intense, stemming not simply from rejection of Zionist ideas per se, but rather from a belief that Zionism would interfere with Arab nationalism.

Ideologically, the seeds of anti-Zionist opposition nurtured by the international ideal have remained alive. In the 1970's, the truce between internationalism and Zionism has been shattered. Jews once again are being required to ponder choices and priorities... ideology and politics have joined hands... some would even say that the Arab-Israeli conflict is now being fought primarily with words.

Today: Less Ideology, More Politics:

Anti-Zionism today has become far less ideologically-inspired and far more politically motivated. The renewed assault on Zionism is more due to political polemics than old time beliefs and hopes. Instead of the earlier attempt by internationalists to truly ponder their ideals alongside the world's needs, internationalism today is all too often an opportunistic slogan used by Israel's enemies. None of the Arab states nor the P.L.O. has any real claim on or belief in universalism. The great majority are Islamic states by law as well as custom and the P.L.O. Covenant clearly states a desire to create a Palestinian-Islamic state. Of course, one may sympathize with the Palestinian situation, but to do so by calling for the Jews to give up their own nationalism is philosophically and morally absurd.

See for background Alfred M. Lilienthal, What Price Israel (Henry Regnery Co., 1953)

The history of the 20th century has brought in question how sound a strictly left-right ideological interpretation of the past and future can be. A spectrum of progressive attitudes has developed during the 20th century with conservatism having been generally discredited and liberalism gradually merging with democratic socialism as the century progressed. Meanwhile, Marxism and then Leninism gradually took on totalitarian and nationalist features. Although Zionism is indeed tied to liberalism and social democracy, not totalitarianism and Marxist-Leninist-Maoist internationalism, the attempt to brand Zionism as historically attached to the right-wing of world politics is one of political opportunism and not empirical fact.

The Historical Record:

"In its own way, Zionism is the supreme assimilating tendency in Judaism."

David Horowitz

While Western European Jewry at the end of the 19th century saw its future in national assimilation, much of Eastern European Jewry found itself oppressed beyond foreseeable redemption, short of revolutionary upheaval and consequently, susceptible to both utopian Marxist thought and Theodor Herzl's visions.

Political Zionism was reborn in the East -- a minority movement even there, but one propelled at first by the youthful idealism of those Jews, religious and non-religious, seeking a liberated life. At the turn of the century, Zionism was a distant competitor to internationalism.

"All major organizations (Jewish) either opposed it or, at best, took a non-Zionist position. The Jewish communities and the Jewish press sympathized with Zionism only to a very limited extent. Individual Jews in high positions in politics and finance were reserved and often hostile toward Zionism. Jewish labor was influenced by general socialism and communism. Intellectuals and the youth were attracted by universal culture and only rarely found universal values in Zionism. Many Jewish scholars, intellectuals and writers denounced Zionism in a variety of forms."⁴

In the United States, universalism was represented less by an internationalist outlook and more by the melting-pot Americana of the thriving nation of immigrants. Following the Balfour Declaration, a petition was delivered to the U.S. Government signed by 299 American Jews disavowing the declaration because it represented dual loyalty. The American Jewish Committee, though welcoming the Declaration, added that the U.S. is "home" for American Jews and Palestine only a "haven" for oppressed Jewish refugees. Anti-Zionism in the American Jewish community was so prevalent that in 1922 another Jewish organization, the American Jewish Congress, was founded to promote Zionism. Here too, the primarily Western European intellectual origins of the AJCommittee could be contrasted with the more "ethnic-Jewish nationality outlook" of the AJCongress (substantially influenced by ideas from Eastern European Jewry). Only in recent years have the ideological underlinings vanished so that discussions of merging the two organizations has taken place.

Jewish communities in Europe too rallied either to their countries or to the banners of international socialism in opposing Zionism as a claimant on their allegiances. In 1897, on the very eve of the First Zionist Congress which founded the World Zionist Organization, the Executive Committee of the Association of Rabbis in Germany made public its position in proclaiming Judaism a faith requiring its adherents to serve the fatherlands in which they lived. In Russia, the socialist Bund (founded in 1897) sought cultural autonomy for Jews in 1905 but never ceased its opposition to Zionism. In England, Jewish nationalism was denied by both of the principal Jewish organizations, the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-American Association.

Following World War II, the idea of a Jewish State in Palestine gained ground. Not only did the Balfour Declaration make the dream somewhat less utopian, but intense ideological opposition declined steadily. Woodrow Wilson's emphasis on national self-determination became part of the international political milieu. Ever since, the history of Zionism has been one where pragmatism has made constant inroads over ideology and implementation more important than theory.

⁴"Anti-Zionism," Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel, (Herzl Press in NY, 1971) pp. 47 - 48

by the idealism of the early Zionists and by the commitment to socialism inherent in the kibbutz movement and Mapam party. Mapam's newspaper, Al Hamishmar, continues even today to headline on its mast, "For Zionism, for Socialism, for the Brotherhood of Peoples." Indeed, many citizens of Israel celebrate May Day and sing the Internationale. And while many of Israel's political and economic institutions can be criticized with good cause, the basically socialist orientation of both the government and the society is striking -- especially in contrast with the internal situations of many countries which condemn Zionism with leftist chants.

In today's world, there is no absolute incompatibility in a combination of Jewish nationalism and Jewish internationalism. In the immediate years, clearly a Zionist must give his priority to perpetuating his nationality in the face of growing pressure to lead Israel on the road to suicide. But the same Zionist can be an advocate of socialist internationalism. After all, until the actual dawn of a new era in human and ethnic relations everyone must live in the present. Why everyone but the Jews seems to be granted this privilege does in fact make one wonder if anti-Zionism is the modern form of anti-Semitism.

Only the Trotskyites remain fixed to theoretical abstractions which necessitate an absolute refusal to identify with anything short of international revolutionism. Through the Young Socialist Alliance, New Left anti-Zionism has been significantly strengthened and expanded. But the Trotskyites too are hypocrits and opportunists. Rather than pointing out that the North Vietnamese, in the civil war now completed, were not true socialist revolutionaries but very nationalistically inspired, the Trotskyites pretended the North Vietnamese were the vanguard of the new world. Further, in supporting the P.L.O. call for a "democratic-secular state," the Trotskyites know well that this is jingoist rhetoric. If there is an opportunity for the YSA to find additional support through anti-Israel or anti-U.S. policies, then they seem to relish such options, no matter what the reality.

Conclusion:

Zionism and internationalism have competed for the allegiances of Jews for nearly a century. When abstract, the competition seemed legitimate. As the world has become less ideologically certain and more aware of ideological contradictions, the competition has become coopted with political motivations.

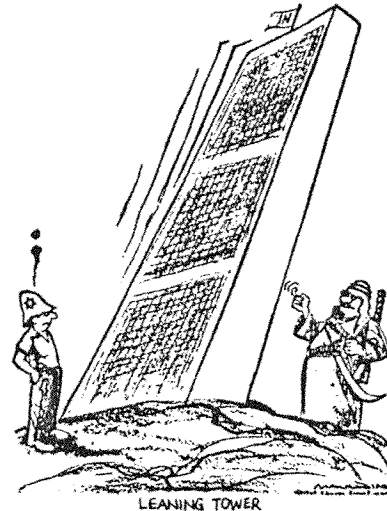
Zionism is the success story of a movement for national liberation which is unique in all of history. Internationalism, for decades in decline, is nevertheless clearly a future necessity. They are both ideological orientations which need not be in opposition. In fact, unless a compatible relationship can be attained between nationalism (the present), and internationalism (the future), it is unlikely any nationalism will flourish in a world escalating toward chaos.

As so often in the past, Jews should help assume the intellectual lead in pointing the way from current conditions to tomorrow's solutions. In doing so, they need not disavow Zionism, they need instead an appreciation of the historical interplay between nationalistic ideals and internationalist-inspired policies -- but this is only a recognition of real-life dilemmas, not incompatible ideologies.

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*(from page #7) Sol Stern, "My Jewish Problem -- and Ours," p. 364 in Porter and Drier (eds.), Jewish Radicalism, (Grove Press in N.Y.), 1972

necessity?



If the real challenge today were ideological, Zionism would be more than ever capable of response and counterattack. The challenge, however, is primarily political. Fueled with petrodollars and motivated by resurgent ethnic pride and the belief in eventual victory over the Jews in view of October's Yom Kippur War in 1973, the Arab world has unleashed the greatest anti-Zionist offensive to date. The Rabat Conference was a clear signal of Arab intentions to continue the "jihad" against the Jewish State. And when the Palestine National Council met in Cairo in June, 1974, a writer on Arab Affairs, David Hirst, indicated that there "was hardly a delegate there -- guerrilla leader, 'independent,' notable, intellectual or West Bank deportee -- who does not believe that Israel is now ultimately doomed, that the October War marked the beginning of the end of Zionism."¹

The second reason anti-Zionism is far less supportable today than in earlier years is the very success of Jewish nationalism. It was one thing to argue against Zionism at a time when it was but a dream and when the world seemed to provide other alternatives for the Jews. Had the history of the 20th century taken a more civilized and progressive course, Jews might have found themselves far less attracted to political independence. The Holocaust was the great earthquake of course: in addition to Nazi barbarism, no country opened its doors to Jewish immigrants before or even after the full extent of the "Final Solution" became known.

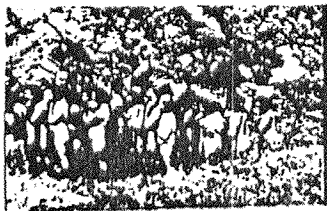
Still, the Holocaust is not the whole answer. Socialist internationalism has proved a far more visionary and distant creed than most thought it would be at the turn of the century. The circumference of human sympathies has not yet expanded far beyond nationality. The Second International collapsed when the workers took up arms in World War I not on the basis of class solidarity but on the feelings of national loyalty. Only a small portion of the intellectual classes, the most ideologically committed among them, have remained fixed to universalism. The workers, the proletariat, have chosen a more touchable and liveable identity, i.e. nationalism. After World War II, the U.N. symbolized a world order not of humankind but of sovereign states equal not on the basis of human population but through the concept of national identity. Recent developments at the U.N. and its Specialized Agencies indicate how deeply entrenched a nationalist mentality remains.

It is intellectually hypocritical today to support the Vietnamese, Palestinians, Blacks in Rhodesia and South Africa, and not the Ibos in Nigeria, Kurds in Iraq and Jews in Palestine: As Michael Walzer comments, "The New Left has made its peace with virtually every nationalism in the world except that of the Jews." And he continues:

"It is even possible to urge that the right to statehood be foregone, so long as one continues to defend the right and the security of all those peoples who choose to exercise it. There is nothing wrong, that is, with attempts to convert the Jews -- or the Palestinians, Tanzanians, or Pakistanis -- to socialist internationalism. That is an old and honorable leftist occupation.

But there is a great deal that is wrong with attempts before the conversion of the Jews, to undermine the state of Israel or call its survival into question."¹

Zionism is now a reality and the world has failed to convincingly offer alternatives. On the positive side, Jewish nationalism has proved itself one of the most dynamic and productive. Israel is a living example of how a people are capable of establishing a cultural community in a setting of political independence which is its own justification for existence. The decision to live as a nation can be no one's except that of the Jews where they (the Jews) are concerned. The general decline in ideological orthodoxy has made it incumbent upon all intellectuals to step back from theory and take a long look at reality and this signifies still a third reason for anti-Zionism's failure to legitimize itself.



¹Jon Kimche, "The Making of a Myth: Unwarranted Lessons of the October War," in Midstream Magazine, August/September of 1974, p.3.

¹Michael Walzer, "Nationalism, Internationalism, and the Jews: The Chimera of a Binational State," in Howe and Gershman (eds.), Israel, the Arabs, and the Jews (Bantam Books in N.Y., 1972), p. 186.



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ZIONISM And PALESTINIANISM: Painful Rethinking

Why is there such an ominous fatalism in the prophecies for continuing turmoil between Israel and the Arabs? Even in this period of relatively hopeful assessments, a man whose basic rules of thought are relativism and anti-determinism, Lord Caradon, the principal author of U.N. Resolution #242, has recently concluded that:

It will be something of a miracle if another major war in the Middle East is prevented. And no one doubts that the next war will be far more disastrous in bloodshed and devastation than the previous quick conflicts in 1967 and 1973.²

What is it about the struggle in the Middle East that makes a resolution of the dispute which periodically explodes into ever more disastrous warfare so difficult to even conceive? Why do journalists and politicians continually focus on the potential for regional or even world cataclysm arising from the sparks of never-ending Arab-Israeli

¹For an interesting summary of different theses on the "intractable" nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict see "Who is to Blame for the Persistence of the Arab-Israeli Conflict," article #13 in Y. Harkabi, PALESTINIANS AND ISRAEL (Keter, Jerusalem: 1974). This useful collection of 17 of Harkabi's essays during 1969-1974 can be considered a semi-official presentation of the views held by the Israeli government.

²Lord Caradon, "Can Another Middle East War be Prevented," THE TIMES (London), 1 July 1975.

M. Bruzonsky & I. Singer

animosity?³

Two Nationalisms, 1 Homeland

In 1905 an Arab Christian nationalist, Neguib Azoury--at the time seeking with French assistance the liberation of Syria and Iraq from Ottoman rule--forecast unending Arab-Jewish conflict with serious world implications. His and other realpolitik visions of the future should have alerted the emergent Zionist movement to the seriousness with which Arab nationalists regarded the Zionist idea. "Two important phenomena," he wrote,

of the same nature and yet antagonistic, manifest themselves nowadays in Turkish Asia but have drawn very little attention to themselves. They are the awakening of the Arab nation and latent effort of the Jews to reconstitute on a large scale the ancient kingdom of Israel. These two movements are destined to fight each other continually... On the final outcome of this struggle may well hinge the destiny of the whole world.⁴

Azoury of course did not foresee modern weaponry nor the complex circumstances facing contemporary world society. But he did foresee the broad nature of unfolding events in the Middle East. And the stark contrast between his warnings and the romantic-utopian visions of many early Zionist immigrants can today be recognized as a partial explanation for how two nationalisms could collide with so little appreciation for the legitimacy of each other's aspirations. That perceptions on both sides have altered so little in the past half century is the greatest of all reasons for today's sense of fatalism.

Herzl's "Jewish State" never contemplated the Palestinian problem--he was much too preoccupied with the Jewish one. And Herzl never foresaw the revolution in ideas which quickly was to transform the notion of colonialism, however benevolent and historically valid,

President Ford's repeated impolitic warnings have practically legitimized another Arab-initiated war if negotiations should become "stagnated" for any reason. And among journalists, Joseph Alsop, for one, recently warned the U.S. that "It appears horribly likely that the new turning point--test will come in the passion twisted Middle East, where our oil jugular also lies. It will be a fateful test, probably requiring mobilization and maybe much worse than mobilization." Joseph Alsop, "From Post-War to Pre-War," WASHINGTON POST, 17 December 1974.

⁴quoted in Shlomo Avineri, "Political and Social Aspects of Israeli and Arab Nationalism" in Curtis, et. al. (eds), THE PALESTINIANS (Transaction Books, N.J.: 1975), p. 97.

from an accepted to a despised phenomena. Had Zionists been more circumspect they would have carefully differentiated in the very beginning the uniqueness of Jewish nationalism from European imperialisms as well as from Christianity's sense of "the white man's burden". That the Arabs, with very few exceptions, had no patience for explanations of the Jewish situation and of the potential for Arab-Jewish cooperation is hardly justification for early Zionist insensitivities. Nevertheless, it is always easier to look back and indicate what might have been. The exercise however primarily has value if it can lead to what might be.

Centuries--latent Arab nationalism was just emerging at the turn of this century, with all of the manifestations a feudal and tribal society inevitable expresses. Boundaries were undefined with various communities and ethnic groups than consolidating around territorial homes--much as occurred in earlier centuries in Europe. Pan Arabism* was already in political and ideological contradiction with claims for local authority originating in feudal relationships and economic patterns. Eventually, 20 Arab states were to arise within what is today thought of as "the" Arab nation and sometimes referred to as the "Arab world". And in Palestine, significantly aroused by the European nationalism represented by Zionist immigration, the Palestinian Arabs--whose loyalty then was to family and town and who thought of themselves, if they thought about it at all, as southern Syrians--were experiencing the first birth-pangs of modern political

*Pan-Arabism remains in a sense the counterpart "mythology" to Zionism's insistence that the majority of world Jewry should and will come to reside in Eretz Yisrael. It was and is a belief linked to the renaissance of Arab civilization much as the resurrected Jewish State needed and needs a metaphysical linkage making Israel the homeland of the Israelis and also of the world Jewish Diaspora. That many sabras insist they are Israelis, not Zionists or Jews, is a comparable development to Arab realization that Pan-Arabism is in the nature of a historical dream and that national allegiances are likely to remain. However, if religion for many Jews is dead one's relationship to the Jewish State has nevertheless taken on nearly theological dimensions. For Arabs, Pan-Arabism is as well more than a political construct. It is also a metaphysical orientation and in this sense a "foreign" state ruled by Jews is "alien" to the Pan-Arab dream whether Israel is composed of Sephardim, Ashkenazim, or sabras. Pan-Arabism and Zionism are then both metaphysical constructs--they are in the nature of beliefs not challengeable by attempts at invalidation by outsiders, especially attempts which come from political and cultural opponents. The same might be said about many national and trans-national identities--including Palestinianism. In most cases, outsiders attempt-

awareness. Paradoxically, without Zionism there may never have been a separate nationalism that could be termed Palestinianism. With Zionism, as Arle Lova Eliav has written,

The Palestinian Arabs have turned into the most tragic Arab national group in the Arab world. They were the biggest losers among all the Arab national groups: they were the only ones not to gain independence. Every other Arab group that crystallized into a national movement acquired a state. Moreover, no Arab state or nation besides the Palestinian Arabs had had to suffer the pain of refugeeism on such a scale.⁵

With the approach of WWI both Jewish and Arab efforts to attain pledges of support for their political-national goals were greatly intensified. In an era when imperialism and colonialism were not pejorative expressions but rather notations of accepted reality, such was the natural course of events. Behind the scenes, French-British intrigue and Wilsonian principles of open covenants and self-determination continually clashed. Just as the post-WWI "peace" conferences unknowingly established the conditions to feed WWII, the Western powers, especially Great Britain, manipulated both Jewish and Arab nationalisms setting the scene for the generations of bloodshed to come. What seems today a perpetual Israeli-Arab struggle was not in a deterministic sense inevitable,* but it became increasingly likely as traditional British divide-and-rule tactics fanned tensions and blocked efforts at cooperation.

⁵Arle Lova Eliav, LAND OD THE HEART (JPS, Philadelphia: 1974), p. 124. This book appeared in Hebrew in 1972 and the English edition was updated in view of the Yom Kippur War.

* In some cases today's fatalism about the conflict does extend to nearly a belief in historical determinism. For instance, Walter Laqueur writes in his HISTORY OF ZIONISM that "The Arab-Jewish conflict was inevitable, given the fact that Zionism wanted to build more than a cultural centre in Palestine... Arab intransigence was the natural reaction of a people unwilling to share its country with another."⁶

⁶Walter Laqueur, A HISTORY OF ZIONISM (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York: 1972), pp. 595-6

A Unique Movement

Zionism had emerged from Europe as a uniquely revolutionary movement for national liberation.** Herzl's dream of a Jewish State did not substantially deal with the Arabs of Palestine because the early Zionists were not aware of or much concerned with the actual conditions then existing within the homeland-to-be. The latent Arab nationalist sentiments in Palestine likely to be aroused by Jewish plans were not taken on the Zionist agenda. Zionism was rather understandably self-centered. The territorial focus on Palestine arose from the historical and spiritual culture of Judaism that had survived two millenniums essentially awaiting a linkage with a modern political movement--if not pre-empted by the Messiah that is. Zionism was at the same time cosmopolitan and chauvinistic. The Jews had become worldly yet they had remained apart. The Zionist plan to return to peopledom in Palestine was perceived to be both a necessity and a desirable end in itself. Jewish aspirations to bring forth a political-national rebirth to what was already a rich, living culture simply could not grasp the likely reaction to Zionism of those who were then living in Palestine--then a rather desolate corner of the Ottoman Empire and a rather remote region within the Arab world. Even today, it needs to be emphasized, main-stream Zionism has made only a little more progress in understanding Palestinianism than Palestinianism has made in realizing the truths about Zionism. Jewish marchers around the White House this very October chanted Golda's "There is No

** Those educated in the West or in Israel, however, often fail to realize as Albert Memmi dramatically points out, that "The Arab Jews...dreamed of the Promised Land, Eretz Israel, long before the Russians and the Poles did."7 When the State was founded the yearnings for Zion were most expressed not by Western Jewry (and couldn't be shown by Soviet Jewry) but by Jews then living within the Arab world--more than half a million flocked to Israel within a few years. Zionism even today shows its European bias by failing to appreciate this fact, a fact which makes nonsense the condemning of Israel as a European transplant. Between emigration from the Arab world itself and those born in Israel, Israel is demographically 75% Middle Eastern. And though the population exchange that took place right after the 1948 war should not become an argument for relieving Zionism of any responsibility for what happened to the Palestinian Arabs, it is true that Israel absorbed more refugees just from the Arab world than the number of Palestinian refugees who fled.

7 Albert Memmi, JEWS AND ARABS (O'Hara, Chicago: 1975), p. 26.

Palestine" slogan while at the same time the PLO at the U.N. propagated the similarly farcical notion that Zionism is to be condemned as racism and colonialism.

Zionism's success necessitated more than a creative blending of Jewish history and spiritualism with modern political outlooks. Additionally, considerable 19th century utopian and socialist idealism flowed into the Zionist waltenschauung. All three influences together--the religious-historical, the utopian-socialist, and the secular-political--were to forge a unique national consciousness and a new Jewish spirit. And what was created has continually grown in strength and magnetism. The oppressed and repressed Jews of Europe, followed by entire communities of Sephardic Jews after 1948, began the building of what for them was to be either a rebirth of Jewish life in the promised land, a new world of socialist fraternalism, or simply salvation from anti-Semitism.

Bite the Bullet

But only the socialist tendency within Zionism ever really attempted to bite the bullet of two nationalisms in one land by proposing a bi-national solution to the Palestine problem. Ideologically-inspired and most likely not even then pragmatically possible, this solution was completely unacceptable to the religious-historical segment of Zionism and for realpolitik reasons has become more and more unacceptable to the secular-political component. It is likely bi-nationalism even if attempted would have resulted in warfare and partition, as conditions within Lebanon today help emphasize. Nevertheless, no matter how much PLO propagandists today try to sell the "democratic-secular state" idea (a more naive notion than even bi-nationalism, and one which refuses to recognize even Jewish peopledom), this ideologically-bound vision is a fraud and nearly everyone knows it. Two distinct nationalisms still do not equal one merry nation-state, except for those totally blinded by ideology or purposefully deceptive about actual intentions. The PLO's dogma is unfortunate proof of how much the Palestinians still trail behind the Jews in understanding their enemy's minimal aspirations.

Even as the problem of Arab nationalism became more visible, Zionist leaders such as Dr. Weizmann argued (in a personal letter written in 1930) that since Palestine was now designed to solve

a worldwide problem... the rights which the Jewish people has been adjudged in Palestine do not depend on the consent, and cannot be subject to the will,

of the majority of its present inhabitants.⁸

The conflict of today was set not only by British imperialism, Zionist and Palestinian chauvinism played and play their parts. There is surely enough guilt to spread to all three major parties.

For many years Ben-Gurion continued to insist publicly that economic benefits would override the political antagonisms--whether he believed this even back in the 1930s is questionable. Living the self-determination inherent in liberating the Jews from the conditions of Europe, Zionist participants were not able to grasp the profound tensions building in Palestine along Jewish-Arab lines. As a result, or more probably as a manifestation, leaders such as Ben-Gurion never troubled to learn Arabic or associate with Arab society. And when the socialist-universalist and Jewish-particularist elements of Zionism came into conflict--for instance in the decision to promote only Jewish labor and not hire any Arab workers--the strictly Jewish positions were usually victorious exacerbating the development of two societies in Palestine.*

There was, however, on the part of some Jewish leaders, recognition of the need for a real agreement with the Arabs. Having become more sensitized to Arab attitudes between the two world wars, vain attempts at co-existence were made. Even Ben-Gurion by the mid-1930s had realized that:

The way to an agreement with the Arab people is the paramount problem of Zionist policy... We cannot say to the world, pay

⁸ Guandt, Jabber & Lesch, THE POLITICS OF PALESTINIAN NATIONALISM (University of California Press, Berkeley: 1973), p. 22. Part 1 of this book is a fascinating study of the origins of the Palestinian Arab Nationalist movement. Part 1 of Jon Kimche's THERE COULD HAVE BEEN PEACE (Dial, N.Y.: 1973) is also of special interest.

* That the socialist Zionists recognized how important it was not to act like colonialists and hire cheap Arab labor is one more proof of how unique the Zionist immigration into Palestine was. Nevertheless, for many other Zionists, Jewish labor meant an exclusively Jewish society and Uri Avnery has a point when he concludes that "Hebrew labor, more than anything else, more than international politics, created the gulf between the two peoples living in Turkish and British Palestine. Social intercourse between them became non-existent, economic ties rare and peripheral."⁹

⁹ Uri Avnery, ISRAEL WITHOUT ZIONISM, A PLAN FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST (Collier, N.Y.: 1971), p. 99.

no need to the complaints of seven hundred thousand Arabs, because no concessions must be made to rioters. We must find a solution to the Arab question...by a Jewish-Arab entente.... We must approach the Arab people not with any deception...let us openly say: No matter what happens, we will not budge from here...But we recognize your needs as well, and know your national desires. We want to find a way to secure our common needs as sons of this one homeland.¹⁰

Attempts to compromise

Right up until the declaration of statehood a number of individuals and movements were making attempts at compromise. As late as May, 1948, some Zionist leaders, Nahum Goldmann is right to remind us, still hoped for coexistence.

When it became apparent that the Arabs would react to the establishment of the state by marching into it, there was a timid attempt, by myself and others, to try to reach an agreement with them by postponing for a short time the proclamation of Israel.¹¹

In addition to the attempts of individuals such as Goldmann, a minority opinion within Zionism, represented by the Hashomer Hatzair movement, presented its case to the U.N. Special Committee on Palestine in mid-1947. The warning was blunt, and the bi-national state proposal naturally followed:

Partition carries the seeds of permanent unrest, of estrangement between peoples; it endangers the peace, perpetuates intercommunal strife, and stirs up waves of chauvinism... It is a solution that spells disaster for Zionism and the Jewish people, for Palestine Arabs, and for the future of Palestine as a whole.¹²

By 1948 it appeared coexistence was impossible. The two national movements, both legitimate in their own eyes and terms, were simply unable to understand or tolerate each other.

¹⁰ David ben-Gurion, "Planning Zionist Policy," in Enzo Sereni and R.E. Ashery (eds.), Jews and Arabs in Palestine (hechalutz press, N.Y.: 1936) pp. 140, 148-9.

¹¹ Nahum Goldmann, "The Psychology of Middle East Peace," FOREIGN AFFAIRS, October 1975, pp. 114-5.

¹² THE ROAD TO BI-NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE FOR PALESTINE, August 1947, Tel Aviv, p. 19.

A Charade

Right after WWI the Weizmann-Feisal* talks did dramatize attempts at understanding, but both sides had even then been engaged in something of a charade. The Jews did not unambiguously acknowledge the eventual goal of a sovereign Jewish State, hopefully in all of Palestine; and the Arabs continued to view the Jews as a religious minority to be accepted, but not as equals and certainly not if the goal was a Jewish State. Only a major attempt at cross-cultural understanding offered any hope. But the British were hardly interested in such a potential alliance against themselves. Lord Balfour clearly recognized as early as 1919 that the aspirations of Jews and Arabs were in clear opposition and that British pledges to each side were irreconcilable. "The Four Powers are committed to Zionism," he wrote that year in a Foreign Office memorandum. "In Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the inhabitants of the country."¹³

But by the late 1930s, even with Nazism challenging Jewish physical survival, the British decided to reverse themselves completely--now there was to be no tolerance of Zionist imperatives. British rule was in fact quite a catalyst for turmoil. Had more intense energies during the Mandate period been devoted to Arab-Jewish understanding of each other's needs and aspirations, at least there would have been a possibility of mutual tolerance. As was, British rule made for Arab-Jewish competition and growing antagonism rather than cooperation.

Zionist speakers often point to Emir Feisal as proof of the attempts made by Zionist leaders to reach an early understanding with the Arabs. What they fail to point out, however, is that Emir Feisal was an inexperienced young leader on his first trip to Europe when he made the joint declaration with Weizmann. His statement has to be read in the total context of the various promises extended and the occurrences of the next few years. A few months after the statement and the letter in which Feisal indicated that "We Arabs, especially the educated among us, look with the deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement," Feisal was in London warning of the danger of Jewish-Arab clashes in Palestine because of the Zionist plan to create a Jewish State. Feisal was soon after declared King of United Syria (including Palestine) in 1920 but fled when the French occupied Damascus in July and in 1921 became King of Iraq and consequently largely removed from the Arab-Israeli conflict.

13 Quandt, op. cit., p. 9.

Zionism was faced not only with the increasingly hostile Palestinian Arab population but by British betrayal to the very idea of a Jewish National Home in Palestine -- a betrayal articulated at the very time when such a Jewish refuge was becoming essential. Zionist failure to make a priority of coexistence with the Palestinian Arabs can, in the light of British and Nazi pressures, be better understood. As Arie Eliav admits, there developed a "desire to ignore the problem of the Arabs of Palestine" and this approach "has been a leitmotif in our lives for decades."¹⁴

But by the end of WWII most Zionists were in fact willing to compromise and did through the acceptance of the partition plan of the U.N.* Even today, however, the Palestinians are apparently not willing to openly discuss such a two-state compromise, perpetuating the tragedy that such a solution failed in 1948.

Of course, the Zionists and the Arabs, after having sought British pledges and support from the League of Nations, then took their cases to other great powers and repeatedly to the U.N. Today all of this past maneuvering has culminated in the fighting of a world-wide war for public opinion--a war which is focused with particular intensity on the U.S.¹⁵

With the failure of two British partition schemes and even of the British offer at the St. James Conference to allow the Palestinian Arabs to found their own state in all of Mandate Palestine**, resolution of the conflict short of the battlefield became less likely and both sides began preparations for a showdown.

14 Eliav, op. cit., p. 35.

* A year earlier in fact the Jewish Agency had presented its own similar partition plan.

15 See Theodore Draper, "The United States and Israel, Tilt in the Middle East," COMMENTARY, April 1975, p. 29. Also see Jerome Bakst, "The New Brand of Arab Propaganda" and Lt. Col. William R. Peri, "I Am Abdul," both in THE TIMES OF ISRAEL, April 1975; "Pushing the Arab Cause in America," TIME, 23 June 1975, p. 17; and Marvin C. Feuerwerker, "Ford and Israel," MIDSTREAM, October 1975, p. 30.

** With WWI looming, the British proposed in 1930 an independent Palestine state within 10 years with severe limitations on Jewish emigration -- during the next 5 years a total of only 75,000 Jews and after that only with Arab approval. Many Palestinians wanted to accept, but their exiled leader, Hajj Amin, rejected it since it was hedged with clauses which could have brought about a British change of heart and since it did not allow for his return to leadership in Jerusalem. Jews were furious especially over the immigration restrictions at the very height of Nazi power.

At the U.N., even though a two-thirds majority voted to legitimize the Jewish State (a startling convergence of U.S. and (U.S.S.R. policies) the Arab League states and a number of notable abstainers (Britain for one) opposed any sovereign Jewish State in Palestine.* The story of American Presidential support for a Jewish State and State Department insistence on a U.N. trusteeship is only one indication of how possible it was for the U.S. to have voted the other way. No matter because the Arab states in unison denounced the partition plan and vowed quite openly armed resistance. And neither the U.N. nor the U.S. was prepared to support the U.N. vote in practice. In fact, the U.S. declared an arms embargo on the entire area and the trauma of a potential second-act to the Holocaust swept through world Jewry.

Determined To Fight!

And so began the now quarter-century old tragedy of Arab-Jewish hatred and terror -- more accurately, half-century old. The Arabs it must be said, had been even less promoters of coexistence with the Jews. A few Jews, why not, a movement for Jewish rights and self-determination, absolutely not! If the Jews thought little about Arab nationalism, the Palestinian Arabs thought not at all about the legitimate reasons for Zionist determination. As Arab nationalism developed and waves of Aliyah arrived the Palestinian Arabs became more and more troubled. With the Balfour Declaration there were some riots and by the 1920s many Arabs of Palestine were determined to fight.

Not In The Interests of Zionists

As early as August, 1921, an Arab delegation had written Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill insisting that:

The Balfour Declaration was made without our being consulted and we cannot accept it as deciding our destinies...It is the claim of Zionism that the people of Palestine, after practical experience, will recognize the advantage to the country of Zionist immigration. If that be so, the Jews may be confident that the future immigration policy of (the National Government in) Palestine would not be unfavorable to them: but if the immigration policy of the Zionist Organization proves detrimental to the Palestinian people, this policy should be regulated, not in the interest of the Zionists, but of Palestinians.¹⁶

* Voting against were all the Arab states and those of the sub-continent: Afghanistan, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey and Yemen. In addition, Cuba and Greece.

¹⁶ Quandt, op. cit., p. 16

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A demonstration had already been held in 1920 to protest the first official reading in Palestine of the Balfour Declaration. And then throughout the Mandate period, November 2nd became a day of mourning with shops closed, newspapers appearing with black borders, and black crepe paper festooned on buildings. By 1930 the Arab Executive sent a delegation to London which in a telegram returned the findings that Britain would not back Arab demands and that:

Whereas we are convinced that continuation in usurping our rights in favor of Zionist policy means our extirpation as a nation and consequent disappearance from our country and question for us is one of life and death we believe our people will fight this policy with all non-violent means.¹⁷

Arab restraint however gave way. Both Zionism and Palestinianism had become viewed as matters of life and death. For the Jews, of course, Hitler was beginning to confirm Herzl's worst fears and it became more evident daily that a Jewish State had to exist. But for the Palestinians, independence for themselves was also now a must. In 1936 the Arabs called a six-month general strike and began 3 years of violence and terrorism in response to the British announcement of a new Jewish immigration quota. At mid-year 1936 the British High Commissioner telegraphed home that the situation was in "a stage of imminent revolution".¹⁸ A year later came the first British recommendation for partition. When this failed, the British began arresting and expelling Arab leaders and in 1938 introduced a pass system and built a wire fence along the border with Syria. By 1939 the problem was so grave that the British decided, as mentioned, to reverse their commitment to Zionism and at the St. James Conference made the Palestinians the best offer they were ever to receive.

Arab activism throughout the 1930s and then the fighting in 1947-48 marked the dying spasms of the Palestinian Arab resistance to Zionism. Though through no conspiracy by the Zionists, Palestinian nationalism fell victim to Zionism and then to the designs of Kings Farouk of Egypt and Abdullah of Trans-Jordan. Not until the 1960s did Palestinianism again arise, this time in the form of an embryonic, Arab states sponsored PLO. After the 1967 war, Palestinianism began to reassert itself on the world stage through terrorism and eventually through

¹⁷ Quandt, op. cit., p. 31.

¹⁸ Quandt, op. cit., p. 35.

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political propagandizing in two forms -- condemnations of Zionism and propagation of the fraudulent but intellectually attractive "democratic, secular state" myth. In 1974, the Rabat Conference* became an event which could be considered by the Palestinians similar to how the Jews viewed the Balfour Declaration in 1917.

In the interim 20 years, the quarrel between Israel and the Arabs took on the image of one solely between Israel and the neighboring Arab states. Pan-Arabism was in a sense kept alive by the Israeli issue and the Palestinians had merged their identity within the larger whole -- or had tried to. The humiliating defeat of these states in 1967, however, gave the Palestinians new life and new reason. Not only had the Arab states proved their inability to stand up to the Israelis, but the 20-year experience had exposed the Palestinians to the myth of Pan-Arabism. Not only did many Palestinians not want to assimilate into other Arab societies, these societies, except for Jordan, made life for the Palestinians difficult and acceptance rare.**



Palestinian children Beirut Lebanon

* For the first time the PLO was designated by the Arab States to be the sole representative of the Palestinian people. In a sense, this decision gave a charter to the PLO for the creation of their own state, regardless of whether that charter was meant to legitimize the renunciation of Israel with a Palestine or a state to coexist with Israel.

** There is in fact a parallel with Jewish experience here -- it is one Jews especially should not miss.

In the 60s, Palestinianism arose again and Israeli administration after the Six Day War of the West Bank and Gaza gave rebirth to the Zionist-Palestinian heart of the conflict. Arafat's 1974 appearance at the U.N., on top of the Rabat legitimacy bestowed upon the PLO, symbolized this for the entire world. Ever since the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, two nationalisms have struggled over one "holy land". Bernard Lewis is right in pointing out that "Palestine conflict has now returned to where it began, with the struggle between two peoples for the possession of the same country."¹⁹

Resurgence

The resurgence of Palestinian nationalism under the banner, not exclusively however, of the PLO has focused many minds on the possibility of Jewish and Palestinian coexistence through the creation of a Palestinian State on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. It is a formula filled with complex historical, demographic and political pitfalls. There are advocates among both Jews and Arabs as well as those violently opposed among both Israelis and Palestinians.

Some argue in the alternative that the Middle East conflict was once local and could have been settled in this way but is now one for Big Power decision-making (but this only shifts the debate to possible external imposition of a Palestinian State formula); others argue that a settlement must really be made between the confrontation states and that the Palestinian issue has been purposefully exaggerated far out of proportion; and others review the history of Palestine and see justification for only two states in Palestine -- Israel and Jordan* -- and so the Palestinian

¹⁹ Bernard Lewis, "The Palestinians and the PLO - A Historical Approach," COMMENTARY, January 1975, p. 36.

* There is also the argument that the Palestinian State already does exist in the form of Jordan, that possibly the Palestinians should be encouraged to overthrow Hussein, or that the day will eventually come when the Hashemite Kingdom will collapse and become "the" Palestinian State. The old territory of just Trans-Jordan is 66% Palestinian and with the West Bank is 83% Palestinian. Such an unlikely couple as President Bourghiba of Tunisia and Arik Sharon have at times advocated Hussein's downfall. Arie Eliazar who so strongly recognized Palestinian nationalism even before the Yom Kippur War, nevertheless, as late as last year insisted that Palestinianism must find satisfaction within a single Palestinian-Jordanian state.

Arabs should find self-determination within the Hashemite Kingdom as so many of their numbers have already.²⁰

But there should no longer be any real doubt that a settlement of the decades-old conflict between Zionism and Palestinianism must be a major aspect of any lasting and just settlement. And with signs that even some Palestinians, even some in the PLO, are contemplating the possibility of coexistence with Israel, the Palestinian State idea has come of age again after more than 25 years. An assessment of risks and priorities may lead to the conclusion to oppose the creation of a third state in the area of historic Palestine, but it is no longer possible to avoid the subject implicitly denying the legitimacy of a distinct Palestinian nationalism.

Recognized in Negative Terms

With the broadest of generalizations and without an examination of the subtleties of various positions and outlooks, it can be said that those primarily concerned with Israel's well-being and future make four basic arguments in favor of a Palestinian State. First, of course, it is simply that the two nationalisms both have the right to self-determination. Actually, Zionist leaders implicitly recognized Palestinian nationalism in strictly negative terms. And the Palestine

(cont'd from the preceding page) "I do not have in mind a Palestinian state in the administered areas separate from the state of Jordan...

But the system of government in the new Palestinian-Jordanian Arab state -- monarchical, republican, federative, or some combination of these -- will be for the Arabs themselves to decide."²¹ Aaron Rosenbaum, Research Director for the America Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), "the" Jewish lobby in Washington) believes no real progress can be made on the Palestinian issue until Hussein is toppled. "The essential is a non-Hashemite Jordan", and as a revisionist Zionist, unlike Eliav, he believes this new Palestinian State should only be east of the Jordan River.²²

²⁰ Most recently for example see Paul Riebenfeld, "The Integrity of Palestine," MIDSTREAM, August/September 1975.

²¹ Eliav, op. cit., p. 144.

²² Most recently Rosenbaum presented this view on 19 October 1975 in Washington at a conference sponsored by the Youth Committee for Peace in the Middle East.

National Covenant together with the June, 1974, resolutions of the Palestine National Council have made very clear how justified current apprehensions are.²³ These ideological-political documents force a consideration of the Palestinian State proposal as only a front for pan-Arab and radical Arab designs on all of historic Palestine -- i.e., a West Bank-Gaza state as only step one in the multi-stage plan to eventually swallow up the Jewish State much as the Crusader state of the 12th century was eventually exercised by Saladin. Moreover, these documents contain such complete negations of Jewish nationalism and the Zionist idea that no room for compromise appears conceivable. Unfortunately, the Palestinians have always had more political and ideological content in their proposals for statehood than social or economic visions, and consequently they have contributed immensely to fears that the current goal is an irreducible state rather than a state to fulfill the legitimate national aspirations of a homeless people.

Despite these legitimate fears, Palestinian nationalism, however different in origins and motivations from Zionism, is legitimate, it is argued; and since 1967 many of Israel's supporters have come to the conclusion that it should not be denied expression. Further, the argument that Palestinian nationalism has already been fulfilled within the State of Jordan is demographically sound but psychologically fallacious. And since nationalism is primarily a matter of feelings and allegiances, this Jordanian formula is actually one begging the issue. Even before the Rabat Conference the Associated Press Almanac (1974) reported that the Jordanian Government

is virtually detested by a large segment of the population. Historically, the Jordan River has been the dividing line between the Bedouin area to the east and the land of the more sophisticated Palestinians to the west... It is the differences between these two groups that have long been at the root of Jordan's internal problem.²⁴

Fears Are Legitimate

Post-1967 developments, as horrible as many of the methods used are, have established even in many Zionist minds a Palestinian imperative based on an acceptance of Palestinian grievances and aspirations.

²³ These two documents are reprinted as appendices to the article by Bernard Lewis, op. cit.

²⁴ "Jordan," ASSOCIATED PRESS ALMANAC 1974 (Hamond Almanac, N.J.: 1973), p. 560.

the foreseeable future of any real success in destroying the foundations of the Zionist state. If the later choice is made, at least the entire world will know that Israel has offered the greatest concessions possible, views peace not territories as the overriding imperative, and cannot be charged with intransigence and inflexibility.* It is further pointed out that the PLO should not be expected to publicly come out with a blanket statement renouncing claims to all of Palestine and stating explicitly willingness to live forever in a West Bank-Gaza state; no more than the PLO should expect Zionism to renounce its historical-spiritual ties to Eretz Yisrael and to the Jewish Diaspora. The discussion is over recognition of each other's rights, not over whether either or both nationalisms is willing to totally renounce its guiding philosophy. Both Zionists and Palestinians are being asked to recognize the needs of each other and therefore to settle for less than what each sees as its historical due. "Dreaming" will still be allowed; and over a period of years various forms of cooperation, including possibly Israelis living in Palestine and Palestinians living in Israel, can be contemplated.

*Stanley Hoffman in his recent article "A New Policy for Israel" has outlined persuasively the case for Israeli making of a sweeping series of initiatives aimed at an overall settlement. Even if unsuccessful such a move would take Israel off the hook in terms of world-wide pressures for concessions and Kissingerian salami tactics, if this is what he has in mind. (FOREIGN AFFAIRS, April 1975). A number of other articles have recently appeared in the American Jewish community urging, for a variety of reasons, major Israeli initiatives. See Rabbi Henry Stegman, "Israel and the Territories: A Dissenting View," D'Var, 19 September 1975 (soon to be reprinted in MOMENT); Stephen Phillip Cohen, "The Real Threat of the PLO," MOMENT, May/June 1975, p. 32; Nadav Safran, "What Next In The Middle East," MOMENT, October 1975, p. 25. Also Henry Pachter, "Who are the Palestinians," DISSENT, Fall 1975, p. 387.

Zionist opposition to the idea of a Palestinian State comes today primarily from fears, not from blindness to another people's needs. And though these fears are in themselves legitimate, they cannot soundly any longer be used to justify the refusal to recognize what is in fact feared -- Palestinian nationalism in irreducible guise.

The second argument put forth by those concerned primarily about Israel's future and who also support the creation of a Palestinian State has to do with the very nature of Palestinian demands and internal Palestinian politics -- a politics which is, undebatably, still heavily oriented toward an uncompromising denial of the legitimacy of Jewish nationalism. Would not Israeli willingness to coexist with a sovereign Palestinian State -- to allow the Palestinians a chance at constructive nationalism -- be a tremendous impetus to those within the PLO and within the entire Arab world who are contemplating the possibility of reaching a modus vivendi with the State of Israel? It is said, but hardly proved, that various PLO leaders including Yasser Arafat himself are maneuvering toward such possible coexistence if only Israel would reciprocate by territorial withdrawals or at least a clear policy on eventual withdrawal under specific conditions. Facing their internal political problems -- just as does Prime Minister Rabin whose freedom of action is indeed limited* -- these Palestinian leaders need to be given support in the form of tangible concessions, admissions of past historical wrongs, and mutual contrition in the Christian sense of that term. Only then will the PLO be able to reach a position of compromise, it is said, and accept a two-state solution with probably ambiguous references about the future. The choice then will be one of coexistence or advocacy of continuing warfare with little likelihood in

* Usually it is said that moderate Palestinians cannot risk a real coexistence with Israel because of those more extremist than they. The Arab word "asabia" is said to connote the community demand for conformity with the more chauvinist of policies. But the situation in Israel is extremely problematical as well. According to well-known leftist writer Amos Kelman, "I'm afraid that where the issue of Judea and Samaria is concerned (the West Bank), the Opposition in Israel is so strong that it could lead us to the brink of a civil war." For Kelman, this situation leads him to the conclusion that "The government, which today shuts the door in the face of any kind of negotiations with the PLO, is forcing the next war upon us in the near future."²⁵

²⁵ From ISRAEL AND PALESTINE, A DIFFERENT VIEW currently being published by BREIVA.

Peace & Security

Associated with these first two arguments is a third -- that peace and security are processes. They are not events that occur one day by formal agreement not can they be guaranteed in the long-run by military might or outside pledges. Rather a process of de-escalation must be begun that will result eventually in an overall acceptance to live with each other. Essential to such a process, it is thought, is recognition of Palestinianism and an admission of past wrongs that have resulted to the Palestinian people partly through Zionist policies. Such an admission of wrong is necessary for an agreement on compensation as well as for psychological willingness by both sides to make the turn toward peace required. Stressing the psychological blocks both sides have erected, Zionist leaders such as Nahum Goldmann have courageously led for decades in the struggle for recognition of two competing rights that must find a way to live together in one Palestine.²⁷

And finally, the argument is made that the changes since 1967 in world opinion and international power politics present Israel with a no-choice situation. In 1967 the unanimous decision at the U.N. in the form of Resolution #242 conceived of a Palestine refugee problem and not a Palestine national problem. The resurgence of Palestinian terrorism

^{26a} Among the major publications of FAIR, located in Washington, are PEACE IN THE NEAR EAST: THE PALESTINIAN IMPERATIVE and CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM: TOWARD A NEW SPIRIT IN THE NEAR EAST. Recent testimony by both Dr. Joseph Ben-Dak and Dr. George E. Assousa (co-directors of FAIR) before the Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on International Relations of the Congress gives a comprehensive view of FAIR's outlook.

²⁷ Goldmann's most recent article, op. cit., is consistent with the views he has held and expressed for many years. Goldmann, it should be remembered, caused quite a sensation in Israel when he was apparently invited to Cairo after the Six Day War and the government of Golda Meir insisted he not go.

may well have been ignited by such an avoidance of what many consider the primary problem in the area for the past half-century. For whatever reasons, the world today fully recognizes Palestinianism and while some segments of world opinion consider it the rightful successor to Zionism most conceive of it as a nationalism to coexist with the Jewish State. Failure by Israel to shift the ball to the Palestinians by changing the debate from that of a Zionist refusal to recognize competing Palestinian rights to an Arab failure to recognize Israel's legitimacy and need for assured security is surely a formula for unrelenting world pressure on Israel -- and most importantly, probably escalating American pressure. Pressures already are so strong that Israel was unable in 1973 to even contemplate a pre-emptive strike, was forced to halt a war unleashed against her at its turning point, has been pressured into three withdrawals, and faces the future certain, according to Y. Harkabi, that "We must withdraw; we cannot hold out against the entire world."²⁸

Withdraw?

These arguments which incline strongly toward attempts at reconciliation with the Palestinians through advocacy of a Palestinian State appear convincing. They are, however, seriously countered by a series of equally or even more persuasive arguments in opposition.

Once again, Harkabi has summed up the situation. "Israel is in the grips of a terrible dilemma," he writes. "There can be no peace in the foreseeable future without withdrawal; on the other hand withdrawal, especially complete withdrawal, may increase the probability of war."^{28a} For the great majority of Israelis, their vision goes beyond the question of a Palestinian State on the West Bank and Gaza. This is thought to be much a matter of internal Arab politics anyway. Whether King Hussein's Bedouin-led army, Arafat's PLO, or even a U.N.-sponsored plebiscite determine the future of these territories, Israel's problem is that of security and eventual peace. And consequently, for security reasons alone, withdrawal from occupied territories with or without the vision of a Palestinian State is extremely problematical.

There was war before the territories being discussed were occupied and there could be war after withdrawal. All this emphasis on a Palestinian

²⁸ Paraphrased in Morton W. Murtele, "You are Welcome," MIDSTREAM August/September 1975, p. 48.

^{28a} Y. Harkabi, PALESTINIANS AND ISRAEL (Keter, Jerusalem: 1974), pp. 237-8.

State, it is suggested, somehow overlooks the fact that even the Palestinians and the Egyptians say its purpose is only tactical and its creation will only hasten stage two of Israel's destruction at some future date. Furthermore, it is argued, modern weaponry makes the 1967 lines considerably more difficult to defend than they were then. This very reality might well mean war becomes more likely with those lines existing between Israel and the Arab states than even the current predicament.

1967 - Nightmarish Borders

Israelis worry not so much about the viability of a Palestinian State but about the survivability of an Israel within what were even in 1967 militarily nightmarish borders. Under today's conditions a terrorist in the West Bank with a shoulder-fired SAM-7 missile would be able to attack Israeli airplanes throughout the country -- this is only one example of how much more vital it is that these territories not be available for military purposes against Israel. Economic and manpower considerations also make it extremely difficult for Israel to maintain a large standing army should trouble develop on the West Bank or Gaza. With borders at greater distance, the Israeli mobilization system suffices; with borders and political changes, as contemplated by some the pressure upon Israel economically and militarily could simply become unbearable. Just during the past year Israel's GNP declined 6% and her currency inflated by nearly two-thirds -- what will be the economic costs, directly and indirectly through increased military costs, of a return to the former ceasefire lines? And further, current conditions allow for some flexibility in response to provocations and threats. A return to the 1967 situation without absolutely effective demilitarization and guarantees would put both sides on a more trigger-ready basis.

These fears and anxieties make Israeli support for a return to the 1967 lines, regardless of whether or not a Palestinian State is to be created and not taking into consideration the positions of Gush Emunim and other conservative and religious forces within Israel, extremely difficult. At a minimum there must be, it is argued, a basic change in the overall attitudes of the Palestinians and of the Arab states toward Israel and this would have to be coupled with absolute assurances from the U.S. that Israel's military requirements for assured deterrence would be continually met. One school of thought in the U.S. even advocates a U.S.-Israelis treaty for defense including the actual presence of U.S. forces to establish in all minds Israeli's survivability and the American commitment. This defense relationship, it is thought, is a prerequisite to Israel risking territorial withdrawal under any conditions and a further prerequisite to stabilizing one of the most explosive situations

facing the entire world -- which should give the U.S. sufficient incentive to contemplate such a policy.²⁹

Strengthen The PLO

Looking at the Palestinian State proposal specifically, it is argued that acceptance of such a scheme at this time would only strengthen the hand of the irredentist-terrorist PLO, legitimize Israel's primary antagonist as "the" representative of the entire Palestinian people (when in fact just who the PLO truly represents is in doubt*), and strengthen the "rejection front's" ** belief that Israel is weakening and the time of victory is not too far in the future. The multi-stage formula for eventual victory over Israel, understandably downplayed in view of current international politics and opinion, would probably once again rise as the vision of what comes after withdrawal to the 1967 lines. *** Better, it is thought, to hope for continuing Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation -- Jordan is after all largely a Palestinian State, was carved out of historic Palestine, and the Jordanian delegation that went to Geneva in 1974 was made up in the majority of Palestinians. And better to seek some kind of agreement with whatever Arab states, such as Egypt, might actually be willing to contemplate peace -- doing so will make it impossible for the PLO really to threaten Israel's existence, though some amount of

²⁹ See Richard H. Ullman, "After Rabat: Middle East Risks and American Roles," FOREIGN AFFAIRS, January 1975, p. 284; the exchange of correspondence in the April 1975 issue of FOREIGN AFFAIRS; and Mark A. Bruzonsky, "American Peace Proposals in the Middle East," INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS, Fall 1975, p. 30.

* Bernard Lewis's recent article -- "The Palestinians and the PLO - A Historical Approach," COMMENTARY, January 1975, p. 36, is very helpful on this subject.

** This term is given at present to Syria, Iraq, Libya (in addition to such uninvolved states as China) and the elements of the PLO who refuse any manner of contact, negotiations, or compromise with Israel and who cannot conceive of the possibility, so they state publicly, of coexistence.

*** The last time a high Egyptian official voiced the theory of stages publicly was in Beirut in April, 1974. Egyptian Cabinet Minister Dr. Kamel Abu al-Majd stated, "Egypt is now conducting a multi-stage policy; that's to say the first stage is to achieve the removal of the consequences of the 1967 aggression, then we shall bring about the removal of the 1956 aggression, and in the third stage we will act so as to remove the 1948 aggression."³⁰

³⁰ Al-Anwar (Beirut Daily), 10 April 1974.

terrorism might have to be tolerated. The PLO, some continue to think, might still degenerate due to lack of political or terrorist success and then more moderate Palestinian political elements might rise up from the West Bank or from Jordan itself. When this happens, if it happens, talk of some kind of de-militarized and linked-to-Jordan Palestinian region might begin to make realpolitik sense. In that context the PLO National Covenant will have little life, whereas in the context now being discussed the irredentist aims of the PLO might well become ascendent.

Political opportunism

An associated problem is of course the role being played by the USSR in its support for the Palestinian State idea. As in 1947, the policies of the USSR are based on political opportunism rather than any moral or historical summation of right and wrong. Support for Israel's creation was a move against British hegemony. Support for the PLO today is largely with the hope of achieving a client state in the heart of the Middle East.³¹ A barely viable, entirely dependent Palestinian State is hardly the image of stability that advocates indicate it would be. Complicated with the possibility of more radical leaders taking over than those who might make the original compromise to be satisfied with such a piece of Palestine, it could well prove to be a base for irredentist claims on Jordan as well as Israel creating considerable instability throughout the entire region. With Soviet interests so uncertain and with Soviet weaponry continuing to play such a deciding role in the Middle East conflict, a Palestinian State might well prove to be the harbinger of war rather than the messenger of peace.

After generations of perennial conflict and in view of the often repeated Arab attitude toward Zionism -- most recently precipitating the U.N. fiasco -- this more pessimistic overall approach to the Palestinian State idea is hardly a paranoic one.³²

³¹ See Augustus R. Norton, "Moscow and the Palestinians: A New Tool of Soviet Policy in the Middle East," Center for Advanced International Studies; University of Miami; Washington, D.C. 1974.

³² Those interested in an in-depth analysis of the deep antagonisms that seem unbreachable should refer to Harkabi's *THE PALESTINIANS AND ISRAEL*, op. cit., to the writings of Hans Morgenthau on the Middle East situation, and to the following four recent books: John Latfin, *THE ARAB MIND* (Cassell London: 1975--now being published in the U.S. by Taplinger); Gil Carl Alroy *THE KISSINGER EXPERIENCE--AMERICAN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST* (Horizon, N.Y. 1975); Gil Carl Alroy, *BEHIND THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT* (Capricorn, N.Y.: 1975); and Albert Memmi, *JEWS AND ARABS* (O'Hara, Chicago: 1975).

There is also, of course, the serious problem of instability within the entire Arab Middle East -- and Prime Minister Rabin has been emphasizing the years any settlement would require to be effectuated. Israel could make compromises today only to find a new political-military situation after a series of assassinations and coups tomorrow. This makes any risky compromises for peace all the more problematical.

Finally, those opposing a Palestinian State argue that such a state might be supportable at some date in the future -- but only after real changes had taken place in the philosophy of the PLO. To support such a state now, with the Palestine National Covenant the primary ideological statement of Palestinian Arab philosophy is a sure formula for unending struggle. When the Palestinian State proposal actually represents a real hope for coexistence it should be given priority, but as long as the situation between Israel and the Arabs is one of likely warfare, as long as the Palestinians believe Zionism a racist, colonial alien force which must be exorcised, Israel cannot risk finding herself with Arab armies 15 miles from Tel Aviv and world public opinion cheering Yassir Arafat's "dreams" of slaying the Zionist imperialists.



It is not the debate over a possible Palestinian State out of which the prophets of gloom find reasons for their fatalism and despair. The debate is legitimate and on the whole healthy. Both sides -- those in favor and those opposed (and the fact that this is an issue which transcends whether one is Jewish or Arab is one very significant reason for hope) -- can make substantial and persuasive cases for their positions. A great deal depends on one's assumptions, one's knowledge of both domestic and international political constraints, and one's sense of political reality and political dynamics.

Israel's Response Is Positive

Fatalism's allies are not those who sincerely discuss and debate the possibility of turning the corner on the seemingly perpetual tragedy that has engulfed both Zionism and Palestinianism. Of course there are the naive and the excessively optimistic. But this debate has now become one where the most knowledgeable and the most politically-sophisticated are joining in -- and often disagreeing. The NEW YORK TIMES recently editorialized that Foreign Minister Yigal Allon's U.N. General Assembly address this year "has now opened the door to a discussion -- which his Government tried for many years to avoid -- over the status and aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs." "If the matter at issue is a fair and constructive solution for the problem of Palestinian identity, Israel's response is emphatically positive." Mr. Allon declared. The TIMES was right to point out, however, that

The gap in perceptions of Arabs and Israelis, if somewhat narrowed, still remains wide. But serious dialogue on the Palestinian issue in the months ahead would go far more directly to the core of the Middle East conflict than another round of bitter disputation over a few square kilometers of territory.³³

Unfortunately, fatalism's allies have been some of those most deeply concerned for Israel's well-being. Much of the American Jewish establishment has attempted to close off any debate on the legitimacy of Palestinianism and the errors and shortcomings of Zionism, past and present. Too often a stirring of the most chauvinistic and ethnocentric motivations has resulted from the political and educational efforts coming from many, if not most, of the American Jewish organizations. In tandem, representatives of the Israeli Government and of American Jewry have not only refused to join in the struggle to find any glimmers of hope that could possibly show a path toward peace, they instead have worked diligently to block the attempts of others, silencing and frustrating those they could.

As Rabbi Henry Siegman, Executive Director of the Synagogue Council of America, has recently asserted (speaking only for himself), "It is not easy to get a hearing in the American Jewish community for such dissenting views." There is in the Jewish hierarchy he asserts a "mindless

³³ NEW YORK TIMES editorial page, 6 October 1975.

dogmatism," an "irrational unwillingness to look at new realities," a "troubling tendency of American Jewry to suspend its own critical judgment entirely when it comes to Israeli foreign policy."³⁴

Possibly Foreign Minister Allon's recent initiative on top of that taken by former Information Minister Yariy on 12 July, 1974, (when he spoke of the possibility of negotiations with the PLO if the PLO were to declare its desire for coexistence and were to cease all hostile acts against Israel) is indicative of an impending basic change in the policies of the Israeli government itself. And of course the constraints domestically on Israeli policies have to be recognized. But if this speculation is valid it has yet to reflect itself in a loosening of the restraints on American Jewry. There is something quite shocking in a situation which necessitates the Central Conference of American Rabbis feeling the need, in 1975, to pass a resolution on "Freedom of Speech" calling upon "the American Jewish community" to recognize the debate going on in Israel and "sponsor forums for open discussion of diverse points of view" in the U.S. as well. "No subject," the resolution goes on "including options for a solution to the Palestinian problem, should be ignored."³⁵

Self-Deception

It would be insufficient, however, even to legitimize the intra-Zionist American debate on Palestinianism and the possibility of a West Bank plus Gaza Palestinian State. With the potential for catastrophic conflict ever-present, the central question really is why are not Jewish "minimalists" talking to Palestinian and Arab "minimalists"? Why are we not -- intellectually, psychologically, and socially -- making substantial efforts to break ourselves free from the constraints of earlier years and to initiate interactions with those who are even potentially willing to entertain the possibility of coexistence? To pretend that there are no Palestinians or Arabs willing to talk is the height, today, of self-deception. To insist that all Palestinians and Arabs, today, still utterly refuse to even try sufficiently to understand them we have helped to create something of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Both Zionism and Palestinianism are in need of substantial historical revisionism. The two nationalisms are both more legitimate today than they have ever been. And the conflict over one homeland is at least as

³⁴ Rabbi Henry Siegman, "Israel and the Territories: A Dissenting View," *D'var*, 19 September 1975.

³⁵ INTERCHANGE (published by BREIRA), September 1975, p. 2.

central today as it has ever been. Even amidst preparations for round six, even with the realization of how deep the hatred and suspicion has become, surely we can devote comparable energies to attempting to avert another catastrophe.

